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ABSTRACT

This report describes results and conclusions of a third-party evaluation of a 1-year demonstration project in Alexandria (Virginia) to develop "safety nets" for 12 people with disabilities who were either unemployed or with a history of unemployment. An Employment Security Specialist worked with these individuals and their families to: (1) fashion an individual career development and employment security plan (safety net); and (2) identify, broker, coordinate, and assist in accessing and monitoring use of existing public and private services and resources. The evaluation reports major results in the areas of consumer development (nine consumers developed "safety net" plans); consumer choice and use of alternative activities and resources; and resource, staff, organizational, and systems development. It is concluded that the project demonstrated the value of such a planning approach for addressing career development and potential unemployment. The evaluation identified as areas of concern the supported employment funding and service delivery system, which does not currently support this type of activity, and the segregation of financing, planning, and delivery of supported employment services from other services. Attachments include a sample Individual Safety Net Plan, a resource list, guidelines developed for completing unemployment paperwork, and a report describing the essential elements of a competent supported employment service. (DB)

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THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT "SAFETY NETS" DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
(supported under grant number H133C10037 from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
(for October 1, 1991, through September 30, 1992)

submitted to

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ICON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
"SAFETY NETS" DEMONSTRATION PROJECT: FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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ICON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT "SAFETY NETS" DEMONSTRATION PROJECT: FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This is the final report of results from a third-party evaluation conducted by Wurzbacher and Associates (WAA) of the "Northern Virginia Supported Employment Safety Nets Demonstration Project: Development and Evaluation of an Innovative and Systemic Approach to Addressing the Career Development and Employment Security Needs of Consumers through Enhanced Use of Existing Resources and Effecting of Changes in the Design and Delivery of Supported Employment Services". The Project was operated by ICON Employment Services under an innovation grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research from October 1, 1991, through September 30, 1992.

As a discrepancy design was used to evaluate the Project, this chapter begins with an overview of the Project as presented in the original proposal with respect to purpose, objectives, and principal strategies, followed by detail as to the Project evaluation methodology. The chapter concludes with brief comments referencing the content, format, and limitations of the report.

A. Purpose and Objectives[1]

1. **Purpose** - The purpose of the Northern Virginia Supported Employment Safety Nets Project is:

   > To demonstrate a new and innovative approach to making more effective and efficient use of existing public, private, and personal resources in anticipating and meeting the support needs of consumers of supported employment (SE) services during periods of unemployment; and

   > To effect changes in existing SE systems, most immediately those operated by the Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) and other CSBs in Northern Virginia, so as to more adequately address the career development and employment security needs of the people they serve.

2. **Consumer participant objectives** - As a result of participation in the Project, eight-to-twelve Consumers of SE services provided by the Alexandria CSB will increase their:

   > Knowledge of their career development and employment security needs, in particular those needs encountered or to be expected during periods of unemployment, and "alternative" activities and resources available to meet these needs;

   > Ability to choose from among available "alternative" activities and resources to meet their career development and employment security needs, particularly during periods of unemployment; and

   > Ability to develop and make use of "alternative" activities and resources in addressing prioritized career development and employment security needs, especially during periods of unemployment.

3. **Service representative (staff/organizational/systems) objectives** - As a result of participation in the Project, Alexandria CSB staff involved in the delivery of SE services and members of the Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment Steering Committee will increase their:

[1]Purpose and objective statements are quoted from the original proposal.

> Knowledge of the career development and employment security needs of SE Consumers, especially during periods of unemployment, and "alternative" activities and resources available to meet these needs;

> Ability to develop and make use of "alternative" activities and resources as needed and wanted by SE Consumers to meet their career development and employment security needs, particularly during periods of unemployment; and

> Ability to effect changes in the SE systems in which they are involved so as to more adequately identify, anticipate, and meet the career development and employment security needs of SE consumers, particularly during periods of unemployment.

B. Principal Strategies[2]

1. **Overview** - Project strategies are intended to increase the knowledge and capabilities of SE Consumers and the staff who serve them within the context of existing SE systems. Implementation of the strategies delineated below are to be primarily the responsibility of the Project's Employment Security Specialist (ESS). The intention is that the knowledge gained and capabilities built through her work will be "transferred" to service agency participants in order that they may continue to use such within the existing SE systems once the Project has ended.

2. **Participant selection and Project entry** - Project participants will be Consumers of supported employment services provided by the Alexandria Mental Retardation Services Vocational Services Program or Alexandria Mental Health Services Patrick Street Clubhouse Vocational Services Program. Consumers selected will be persons who are unemployed or have been unemployed at least once during their work career. Upon entry into the Project, each participant will be interviewed and have his/her records reviewed by the ESS for the purpose of:

   > Helping the Consumer decide the persons s/he would like to participate in design and implementation of his/her individual career development and employment security plan; and

   > Developing a preliminary list of Consumer "strengths" (desires, preferences, likes, interests, skills, favorite people and places, etc.) and career development and employment security "needs".

3. **"Safety net" (career development and employment security) planning** - Individual "safety net" plans will be developed by Project Consumers and their "significant others" with the assistance of the ESS. "Significant others" will include the Consumer's present or prospective SE specialist (job coach), City case manager, and, as determined and

[2]The information in this section represents a condensation of the strategic plan presented in the original Project proposal.

decided by the Consumer, family members, friends, present or past co-workers and job supervisors, and any other persons the Consumer desires to participate in the planning process. Each plan will contain:

> A "career development" segment, so as to provide the individual with direction as to where s/he wants to go with his/her employment career, inclusive of desires to improve his/her present job situation or pursue another job; and

> An "employment security" segment, so as to address or anticipated the individual's present or future service and support needs during the period of unemployment.

In both segments of the plan, emphasis will be placed upon formulating strategies for identifying, exploring, developing, and making use of "alternative" activities and resources derived from Consumer "strengths" which can be used to address prioritized needs. "Alternative" in this context means activities, persons, places, and services "outside" of the "rehabilitation system" which can be used to meet Consumer support needs in either area of concern.

4. **Service delivery and resource development** - The primary goal within individual "safety net" plans developed with Project Consumers will be enhancement of their employment status and, in the event of unemployment, their "rapid return to work". The principal role of the Project's Employment Security Specialist (ESS) will be to:

   > Identify and explore existent public, private, and personal activities, resources, and services in addition to and/or which provide alternatives to those available within the SE system for possible use in meeting career development and employment security needs identified in the plans; and then

   > Broker, coordinate, and monitor development and use of these additional or alternative activities, resources, and services.

   ESS priority in these activities will be given to implementing the employment security portion of the "safety net" plan with Consumer participants who are unemployed, learn they are about to lose their jobs, or become unemployed during the year. The ESS will assist Alexandria SE staff in implementation of the career development portion of the plans through identification and exploration of "alternative" resources and activities as her work with unemployed Consumer participants permits.

   In summary, the ESS service role will be primarily one of resource developer and service coordinator. However, in the event needed assistance and support cannot be found or accessed immediately, the ESS will be responsible for providing such.

5. **Monitoring and oversight** - The Safety Nets Committee of the Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment Steering Committee will serve the Project in a monitoring and oversight role. The Committee will

meet with Project staff during month one of the Project to finalize operational plans and then during months three, six, and nine to:

> Review and discuss the Project's financial statement and operational progress and problems;

> Determine strategies for resolving operational problems and maximizing the impact of the Project upon supported employment (SE) systems in Northern Virginia; and

> Review results from implementation of previously determined strategies in these regards.

In addition, each of the seven members of the Safety Nets Committee employed by other than the City of Alexandria will be responsible for following the Project participation of one Consumer, inclusive of individual interviews during months five and eleven of the Project. The Committee will meet with Project staff at the end of month 12 to review and discuss evaluation results preliminary to development of the final evaluation report and determine strategies for use of the results in continued development and improvement of career development and employment security provisions, inclusive of "safety net" features, within Northern Virginia SE systems.

6. **Dissemination and use of results** - Members of the Northern Virginia Supported Employment Steering Committee and its Safety Nets Committee will be responsible for dissemination of Project results to their respective agencies. The Project Director, with assistance from the Project Evaluator, will be responsible for disseminating results to other interested parties in the Commonwealth and the United States. In addition, Project results will be featured in ICONews, distributed to over 500 consumers, parents, professionals, and business people in Northern Virginia. Finally, following completion of the Project, the Project Evaluator will assist the Project Director and Employment Security Specialist and involved service agency representatives in developing proposals for presentation of results at professional conferences and articles for submission to professional journals.

7. **Project continuation** - Continuation of Project-related activities with respect to increasing the organizational capacity of Northern Virginia SE service providers and the Virginia SE system as-a-whole to anticipate and meet the career development and employment security needs of Consumers in a more effective and efficient manner will be a responsibility of members of the Safety Nets Committee and its parent organization, the Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment Steering Committee.

C. Evaluation Methodology

As noted earlier, a discrepancy design was employed, whereby:

> A summative evaluation component focused upon the extent to which the Project fulfilled its purposes and achieved its objectives; and

> A formative evaluation component focused upon the extent to which Project strategies were implemented as planned and/or changed to resolve operational problems and contributed to fulfillment of Project purposes and achievement of Project objectives.

The summative evaluation questions included:

> To what extent did Project Consumer participants demonstrate increased knowledge, choice- and decision-making behavior, and capabilities with respect to development and use of "alternative" activities and resources for anticipating and meeting their career development and employment security needs, particularly during periods of unemployment?

> To what extent did Project service provider representatives demonstration increased knowledge and capabilities with respect to identifying Consumer career development and employment security needs, developing and using "alternative" activities and resources to anticipate and address these needs, and effecting changes in their SE systems so as to more adequately address these needs?

> To what extent did the Project demonstrate a replicable model for more efficiently and effectively addressing career development and employment security needs of SE Consumers, especially during periods of unemployment, and to what extent did this demonstration impact on design and operations of Northern Virginia SE systems?

Formative evaluation questions included:

> Were individual career development and employment security plans developed? Who was involved in their development? What goals and objectives were developed? To what extent were the plans implemented? What implementation barriers were encountered? How and to what extent were these barriers overcome? To what extent did development and implementation of the plans contribute to achievement of individual and Project objectives?

> What were the nature and extent of the "alternative" activities and resources developed by the Project's Employment Security Specialist (ESS)? How and to what extent were services available through the Virginia Employment Commission used to meet career development and employment security needs? How and to what extent were Alexandria SE service personnel involved in development and use of "alternative" activities and resources? What services did the ESS have to deliver directly to Consumers and why? To what extent did the development and use of "alternative" activities and resources contribute to achievement of individual and Project objectives?

> Were Project monitoring, oversight, and evaluation activities conducted as planned? To what extent did these activities contribute to changes in and improvements in Project operations? To what extent did these activities contribute to achievement of Project objectives and fulfillment of Project purposes?

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW (continued)

The Project Employment Security Specialist (ESS) collected, compiled, and summarized summative and formative evaluation information with respect to design and implementation of individual "safety net" plans, inclusive of the nature of and outcomes from development and use of "alternative" activities and resources. With some assistance from Alexandria CSB personnel, she also collected, compiled, and summarized employment-related outcome and process information and financial information relative to cost of services to Project Consumer participants and sources of income for coverage of these costs. In addition, at the end of the Project, she conducted individual "transition meetings" with Consumer participants and selected "significant others". Finally, four Safety Nets Committee members, with an instrument designed by the Project Evaluator, interviewed four Project participants twice during the course of the year as to the nature and outcomes of their participation and their satisfaction with the services received from both Project staff and those of the City of Alexandria.

The following meeting schedule was utilized to review Project progress, identify operational problems, and develop strategies for overcoming problems:

> Weekly meetings of the Project Director and Employment Security Specialist (ESS);

> Monthly "evaluation update" meetings of the Project Director, ESS, and Evaluator; and

> Monthly meetings of the Project's Alexandria Focus Group, with the final two meetings including member responses to the evaluation questions.

Finally, Project staff met with the Project Safety Nets Committee on eight occasions during the year to review Project progress and problems and discuss and determine strategic implications and activities with respect to impact upon Northern Virginia SE systems. Minutes of all meetings were kept by the Project Director.

The Project Evaluator received and reviewed evaluation information from the Project ESS on a monthly basis, conducted monthly "evaluation update" meetings with other Project staff, and participated in meetings of the Project Focus Group and Safety Nets Committee. He also observed one "safety net" planning session and conducted individual interviews with the following persons during the course of the Project year:

> Alexandria Mental Retardation Services Assistant Director (February 1992), Supported Training and Employment Program (STEP) Manager (October 1992), STEP Placement Specialist (October 1992), and two STEP Consumers (October 1992).

> Alexandria Mental Health Services Director of Community Support Programs (October 1992), Patrick Street Clubhouse Director (January and October 1992), Vocational Services Coordinator (January, March, and October 1992), Vocational Services Employment Specialist (November 1992), two Case Managers (October and November 1992), and three Clubhouse Members (February and November 1992).

Following the last of his year-end interviews, the Project Evaluator conducted a preliminary compilation, categorization, and analysis of results for the purpose of developing a preliminary executive summary and making a presentation with the Project Director and ESS at the 1992 Annual Conference of the The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) on November 17, 1992. He developed this final report of results during January 1993.

D. Content, Format, and Limitations of the Report

Following this "Introduction and Overview", evaluation results are presented over three chapters entitled:

> Individual Consumer Development

> Staff, Organizational, and Systems Development

> Summary and Conclusions

Information on individual Consumers who participated in the "Safety Nets" Project varies in its currency, as the last Project-related contact with each extended from mid-October through late November 1992. The Project Evaluator's knowledge of each Consumer also varies somewhat because he personally interviewed only five of the 12 and met but three of the others. His knowledge is similarly restricted by the fact that he interviewed only about half of the employment support and case management personnel who work directly with these 12 individuals. In most cases, the bulk of what the Evaluator herein reports about these individuals, the people who serve them, and what happened in their lives during the course of the Project came from its Employment Security Specialist and members of the Project Focus Group.

Unless otherwise noted, conclusions presented in this report represent the opinions of the Project Evaluator based upon his compilation and analysis of knowledge gained through the activities described in the preceding section. As such, they should not be directly attributed to either ICON Employment Services, the Alexandria Community Services Board, or any other individuals, groups, agencies, or organizations involved in the Northern Virginia Supported Employment Safety Nets Demonstration Project. Also, this report is limited to a summarization of outcomes and strategies with respect to the "programmatic" aspects of the Safety Nets Project. The Project Evaluator assumes no responsibility for an accounting as to the expenditure of Project funds and has no knowledge as to the allocation of such funds other than those which have been rendered him in payment for his services.

CHAPTER II: INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT

This chapter begins with a summary description of the 12 Consumers of Mental Retardation and Mental Health Services provided by the Alexandria, Virginia, Community Services Board who participated in the Northern Virginia Supported Employment "Safety Nets" Demonstration Project. It is followed by a section briefly describing the principal strategies used to pursue and achieve the Project's "Consumer" objectives. The final section presents the principal outcomes from implementation of these strategies, inclusive of an update as to the nature and impact of the "safety net" activities enacted with each of the persons described in the first section.

A. Consumer Participants

1. **Alexandria Mental Health Services** (AMHS) - Six Project Consumers were participants in the Vocational Services (now Work Force) Program operated out of the AMHS Patrick Street Clubhouse. In most cases, these individuals have made use of Clubhouse services whenever unemployed.

   a. AMHS Consumer 1 is a 39 year old man who lives in an AMHS supervised apartment. He finished his junior year of high school. At the onset of the Project, he had been unemployed about two years. His prior work experience included at least nine jobs over an 18 year period, with his longest stint being four years as a micrographics operator with U.S. Navy, a job he secured through a rehabilitation agency. During periods of unemployment, he has secured general relief funds and food stamps. His illness is diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenia, and he has a history of substance abuse.

   b. AMHS Consumer 2 is a 29 year old man who is a high school graduate and, at the onset of the Project, was enrolled at a local university. He was living by himself in a Section 8 apartment, but engaged to be married. He had been employed for about two years as a part-time clerical assistant with Alexandria Substance Abuse Services. His prior work experience included four competitive jobs, three in retail sales, from 1981 through 1986, when he was hospitalized. He was unemployed until 1988, but held a series of volunteer jobs over the next two years. While unemployed, he has secured general relief, rent reductions, and charitable relief. His illness is diagnosed as schizophrenia.

   c. AMHS Consumer 3 is a 39 year old woman with a bachelor of arts degree in home economics. At the onset of the Project, she was living in an AMHS supervised apartment and employed in a "temporary employment position (TEP)" as the Clubhouse receptionist/secretary. Prior to her illness, diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenia, she worked five years as a home economics teacher. She has secured unemployment benefits in the past.

   d. AMHS Consumer 4 is a 40 year old man who completed his sophomore year of high school. At Project onset, he was living in an AMHS supervised apartment and working in a part-time TEP as a stock clerk at a local retail store, located one block from the Clubhouse. He had held this job for four months and secured it with the help of the Clubhouse Vocational Services Coordinator. His pre-Project employment history included at least 10 jobs over a 20 year period,

mostly in the construction industry. During periods of unemployment, he has secured general relief and food stamps, upon occasion stayed in shelters, and at times lived "on the street". His illness is diagnosed as depression, and he has a history of substance abuse.

e. AMHS Consumer 5 is a 34 year old man who completed ninth grade. At Project onset, he was receiving AMHS residential services and had been employed for about a year in a TEP as a part-time stock clerk at the same retail store as AMHS Consumer 4. He has worked "on-and-off" since leaving high school, primarily in the construction industry, with his longest stint having being two years as a door mechanic. During periods of unemployment, he has secured general relief and food stamps. His illness is diagnosed as schizophrenia.

f. AMHS Consumer 6 is a 35 year old man who lives in an AMHS supervised apartment. He completed ninth grade. At the onset of the Project, he was employed by a local rehabilitation agency in an enclave working on a Federal contract under a U.S. Department of Labor certificate at subminimum wage based upon measured productivity. His illness is diagnosed as schizophrenia.

2. **Alexandria Mental Retardation Services** (AMRS) - Six of the Project Consumer were participants in AMRS Vocational Services supported employment operations, either Entec or STEP (Supported Training and Employment Program).

a. AMRS Consumer 1 is a 26 year old woman who is also served in an AMRS supported living program. She graduated from high school. At the onset of the Project, she had been working as a part-time receptionist for AMRS Vocational Services for about a year. In the preceding five years, she had held three other jobs, the longest for a period of 10 months, but had been laid off from each and unemployed a total of about three-and-a-half years. During periods of unemployment, she has, as at present, returned to work at the AMRS Vocational Services offices, adjacent to its workshop operation. She is diagnosed as mentally retarded and has a seizure disorder.

b. AMRS Consumer 2 is a 29 year old woman who lives with her mother. She received her schooling in a special center. At the onset of the Project, she was employed part-time as a salad bar attendant, a position she had secured through STEP and held for three months. Her prior work history included three jobs over a six-year period, interspersed with two extended periods of unemployment. During periods of unemployment, she has either stayed at home or returned to the workshop, sometimes working in temporary enclaves. She has Down Syndrome and a thyroid problem.

c. AMRS Consumer 3 is a 28 year old woman who lives with her grandparents and sister. She received her schooling in a special center. At the onset of the Project, she had been unemployed for over a year and was spending her days with a neighbor. She had work experience in both a sheltered workshop and an Entec enclave, but lost her position in the latter due to unresolved transportation issues. She has a diagnosis of moderate mental retardation.

d. AMRS Consumer 4 is a 46 year old man with no formal education. At the onset of the Project, he was living in an AMRS supervised apartment with a friend and had been employed for several months at a restaurant. His work history for the preceding eight years included five other jobs, all in food service, with the longest lasting nearly four years and but short periods of unemployment (one-to-three months) between jobs. During these periods, he has secured unemployment benefits, as well as food stamps, utility assistance, rent reductions, and charitable relief. He has a diagnosis of mild mental retardation and a chronic stomach problem.

e. AMRS Consumer 5 is a 28 year old man living with his parents. He was schooled at home through a special center and secured his G.E.D. through adult education at the age of 22. At Project onset, he was working in a volunteer job at the public library, having been laid off from a full-time job as a mail clerk for the Federal government. Relative to the latter, he had, with the assistance of his parents, filed an EEO complaint. Prior to his Federal employment, he worked three years for a bank, but lost this job when the bank moved its operations out of the area. He is diagnosed as mentally retarded.

f. AMRS Consumer 6 is a 45 year old woman who lives in an AMRS supervised apartment setting. She attended special education classes until age 18. At the onset of the Project, she had been unemployed for six months. She had competitive work experience in a stationary store and a fast food establishment. She has also worked on an AMRS Vocational Services mobile crew and in its sheltered workshop, to which she has returned during periods of unemployment. During these periods, she has also secured unemployment benefits, food stamps, and rent reductions. Her diagnosis is mild mental retardation.

B. Principal Consumer Development Strategies

1. **"Safety net" participant selection** - The 12 individuals described in the preceding section were selected for Project participation by AMRS and AMHS staff in October 1991. By December 12, 1991, the Project Employment Security Specialist (ESS) had conducted initial interviews with each of the participants, members of the vocational services staff who worked with them, and, in some cases, their case managers. By mid-December, she had also reviewed the program records of all AMRS Consumers and four of the AMHS Consumers.[3] From these activities, she developed for each Consumer:

   > an initial biography, inclusive of educational background, residential situation, and work history;

   > A preliminary employment-related "strengths/needs" profile; and

   > A tentative list of persons the Consumer would like to assist in development and implementation of his/her "safety net" plan.

[3]Permission to review records of one AMHS Consumer was not received until February 1992. The ESS was never able to review of the sixth AMHS Consumer.

2. **"Safety net" planning**[4] - The initial "safety net" plan was developed in January 1992 with an AMRS Consumer within the context of his annual interdisciplinary team meeting held for the purpose of developing his individual services plan (ISP).[5] The meeting was facilitated by his AMRS Case Manager, with participation by the Consumer, his parents, the STEP Manager, the Project ESS, and the Project Evaluator. The introduction of the career development and employment security concepts within the context of the ISP development process proved to be a bit cumbersome, as both concepts were new to team members and neither fit readily into the ISP format. As a result, it was determined that the remaining "safety net" plans would be developed at separate meetings, with the hope of addressing "safety net" issues as part of the ISP development process at some future date.

   "Safety net" plans were developed at individual meetings with the other five AMRS Consumer participants in January, March, April, June, and August. STEP staff took part in each of these meetings, with one being attended by an AMRS Case Manager. Family members participated in three of these meetings, and a Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) Counselor took part in one. The Project ESS participated in all AMRS planning meetings and wrote up all "safety net" plans.

   Development of "safety net" plans with AMHS Consumers, all involving the Project ESS, was somewhat more difficult, for varying reasons[6]:

   > Following a delay in securing informational releases from the Consumer, the first AMHS "safety net" plan was developed in April 1992, with participation by the Consumer, his fiance, a close friend, the AMHS Vocational Services Coordinator, and his DRS Counselor

   > Development of the second AMHS plan, delayed by the Consumer's initial reluctance to participate, occurred in May 1992, following his apparent cessation of drug use and a concurrent reawakening of his desire to pursue employment and educational opportunities. Participation was by the Consumer, his DRS Counselor, and the AMHS Case Manager, Vocational Services Coordinator, and Employment Specialist.

   > Development of the third AMHS plan, delayed while the Consumer was in the process of securing desired DRS services, occurred in June 1992, and involved the Consumer, the AMHS Vocational Services Coordinator, her DRS Counselor, and a representative from DRS Comprehensive Employment Services (CES).

   Plans were not developed with the other three AMHS Consumers, one because he did not return to the Clubhouse following his early departure from a mandated stay in a detoxification program and the other two because of failed attempts to schedule planning meetings.

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[4]See Section C in this chapter for "safety net" goals and strategies which were developed with each Consumer participant. See Attachment 1 content and format of "safety net" plans.

[5]Regulations require developing an ISP in this manner on an annual basis.

[6]Including less AMHS programmatic emphasis on employment outcomes than in AMRS operations (see Chapter III for further discussion in this regard)

3. **"Safety net" resource development** - Concurrent with getting to know Project consumers and subsequent development of their "safety net" plans, the Project ESS conducted activities designed to identify, explore, and develop "generic" and "specialized" resources which might assist Consumers in addressing their "career development" and "employment security" needs. In the process, she compiled a "Safety Net Project Resource List" (see Attachment 2), including listings for:

   > Volunteer work sites and sources
   > Networking sources
   > Unpaid work experience sites
   > Unemployment resources
   > Educational opportunities
   > Service and support agencies

   Nine of the 12 Project Consumers made use of one or more of the resources from these listings. (See Section C in this chapter and Section B in Chapter III for more detail in this regard.)

4. **"Safety net" service delivery** - With one exception, all Project Consumers continued to receive services from AMRS or AMHS staff throughout the Project year, including vocational services staff who:

   > Made arrangements for and participated in "safety net" planning meetings;

   > Delivered job development and/or employment support services in volunteer and competitive job settings; and, in some cases

   > Were involved in developing "generic" resources and addressing Consumer needs outside of the work situation.

   In addition, some Alexandria case management personnel took part to varying degrees in the planning and delivery of "safety net" services.

   As previously indicated and originally intended, the role of the Project Employment Security Specialist (ESS) was primarily one of facilitating the development and implementation of individual "safety net" plans by:

   > Participating in planning meetings and the writing up the resulting planning documents; and

   > Identifying, exploring, and developing "generic" and "specialized" resources, both generally and for individual Project Consumers.

C. Principal Consumer Development Outcomes

1. **Consumer knowledge of needs and choice of activities and resources** - Nine Project Consumers developed "safety net" plans with "significant others". The goals and strategies from these plans, displayed in Table 1 over the next four pages, clearly demonstrate increased Consumer "knowledge of their career development and employment security needs" and "alternative activities and resources available to meet these needs". To summarize the content of individual "safety net" plans:

TABLE 1: INDIVIDUAL "SAFETY NET" (CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY) PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Consumer/Goal	Career Development Strategies	Employment Security Strategies
AMHS*CONSUMER 1 TO START A PART-TIME JOB WITH A CAREER PATH TOWARD ELECTRONICS	1. Monthly meetings with VR counselor to discuss career development progress and problems 2. Career exploration activities (e.g., situational assessments, volunteer jobs, job interviews, etc.) 3. Remedial reading/GED preparation classes	1. Dress and act appropriately for career development and related activities 2. Practice job interviews with Work Force staff 3. Budget money and build savings 4. Seek guidance from Work Force staff
AMHS CONSUMER 2 TO WORK IN THE FIELD OF BUSINESS, PERHAPS IN FINANCE OR COMPUTERS	1. Tutoring or coursework in various software applications 2. Career exploration activities (e.g., informational interviews, volunteer work, career counseling from VR and university, etc.) 3. Continued classwork at university (determine major and secure Bachelor's degree within 3 years)	1. Maintain contact with VR counselor regarding career development activities 2. In event of job loss, secure case management assistance in applying for social security monies and initiating job search 3. Build savings account further
AMHS CONSUMER 3 TO SECURE FULL-TIME FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT POSITION IN NON-FAST FOOD ENVIRONMENT WITH BENEFITS	1. Career exploration activities related to food service management 2. VR job interviewing class 3. Develop response for explanation of gap in employment history 4. Food handling and sanitation certification course	1. In event of job loss, apply for unemployment insurance and look for new job, inclusive of temporary work 2. Obtain and maintain Section 8 housing 3. Seek and accept assistance from Mental Health Services staff in times of need

*AMHS = Alexandria (VA) Mental Health Services [Community Support Services, Patrick Street Clubhouse, Work Force (formerly Vocational Services) Program], Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse, Community Services Board

TABLE 1: INDIVIDUAL "SAFETY NET" PLAN GOALS AND STRATGIES (continued)

Consumer/Goal	Career Development Strategies	Employment Security Strategies
AMRS*CONSUMER 1 TO WORK FULL-TIME AS AN OFFICE ASSISTANT IN A CLERICAL CAPACITY, WITH LIMITED PHONE CONTACT, IN A CORPORATE OR SMALL PROFESSIONAL OFFICE WITH BENEFITS AND SUPPORTS	1. Attend morning or evening typing class to improve her clerical skills 2. Learn to send and receive FAX material by observing and training on FAX machine at Vocational Services 3. Improve her fluency in Spanish by communicating with her mother, speaking with friends, and reading lesson books in the library 4. Obtain a library card from her local branch library 5. Improve copying skills through continued training and use at Vocational Services, library and other offices as available	1. Learn how to take the Metro bus from Vocational Services to her home independently 2. In event of job loss, receive assistance from Residential Services in securing rent reduction and applying for unemployment insurance (if eligible) 3. In event of job loss, secure job lead assistance from Vocational Services, as well as follow-up assistance in relation to securing unemployment insurance
AMRS CONSUMER 2 TO CONTINUE WITH PRESENT FOOD SERVICE JOB, BUT WILL CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE JOB IN CLERICAL WORK (difficulty understanding "career" concept)	1. Maintain current reading ability by buying and reading the Washington Post and magazines on a regular basis 2. Improve clerical skills by taking class or receiving tutoring in typing and/or data entry (initially, would consider this only in event she became unemployed)	1. In the event of job loss, receive assistance from mother in securing increased SSI 2. In event of job loss, receive job development assistance from Vocational Services, to include volunteer position for building and enhancing office skills and possibly obtaining part-time or full-time employment as clerk/secretary 3. In event of job loss, enroll in a reading comprehension improvement and/or math skills improvement program to assist her in achieving career development and independent living goals

*AMRS = Alexandria (VA) Mental Retardation Services [Vocational Services, Supported Training and Employment Program (STEP)], Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse, Community Services Board

TABLE 1: INDIVIDUAL "SAFETY NET" PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES (continued)

II. INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Consumer/Goal	Career Development Strategies	Employment Security Strategies
AMRS CONSUMER 3 TO WORK IN AN OFFICE SETTING FULL-TIME WITH BENEFITS, PREFERABLY WITH ASSOCIATION WHERE SHE PRESENTLY WORKS AS A VOLUNTEER	1. Maintain volunteer position at current part-time level (nine hours/ week) with continued support from Vocational Services staff (beyond period of DRS unpaid work experience stipend if necessary) 2. Receive training in use of copier, FAX machine, and other office equipment at volunteer job site 3. Continue to negotiate for paid position with employer for whom she currently does volunteer work	1. Stop collating when she runs out of one of pages to be collated and ask for additional materials 2. Continue to accept work from her supervisors, perform to desired quality standards, and increase current knowledge of office work (see "career development" strategies)
AMRS CONSUMER 4 TO WORK IN A JOB IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, PREFERABLY IN CUSTODIAL SERVICE (in end-of-year interview, added mall site as a another possibility)	1. Learn to read better at his own pace with tutoring from local volunteer literacy program 2. Improve ability to cook at home through instruction in classes or clubs 3. Attend adult education classes related to other areas of interest (to increase his presence in the community and network with non-disabled friends) 4. Continue participation in Special Olympics, attend sporting events, and do other things in community	1. Learn to obtain and use Metro tickets 2. Pay medical bills out of his own pocket until health insurance begins; in the event of job and/or loss of insurance, secure medical attention as needed from Casey Clinic 3. In the event of job loss, ask for assistance in obtaining food stamps, securing rent reduction, and getting utility assistance 4. In event of job loss, receive assistance from Vocational Services in applying for unemployment insurance and job services assistance from Virginia Employment Commission ADDED DURING END-OF-YEAR INTERVIEW 5. "Never leave a job without already having another one"

TABLE 1: INDIVIDUAL "SAFETY NET" PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES (continued)

Consumer/Goal	Career Development Strategies	EMPLOYMENT SECURITY STRATEGIES
AMRS CONSUMER 5 TO RESECURE JOB WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (has filed discrimination suit with assistance of parents and *pro bono* attorney)	1. Improve reading and writing skills with tutoring from local volunteer literacy program or adult education program, with resource development assistance from case manager 2. Seek and participate in "alternative recreational activities" (meaning other than those in which he is currently involved that are part of local "special needs" program), with resource development assistance from case manager	1. Receive case manager assistance in securing benefits for which he is eligible in order to pay for medical and other expenses, namely, Supplemental Security Income and Medical Assistance (parents decided not to pursue)
AMRS CONSUMER 6 TO KEEP CURRENT FULL-TIME JOB AS OFFICE CLERK UNTIL RETIREMENT	1. To attend typing or data entry class to increase her speed and accuracy 2. In the event of job loss, secure a volunteer job while seeking employment so as to practice, maintain, and expand her clerical skills 3. In the event of job loss, resume schedule of community activities (e.g., attending the "Lunch Bunch" at her church with her parents)	1. Continue to build her savings account 2. Contract for maid cleaning service (this is desire of service providers, rather than of consumer, with residential provider threatening to terminate service; consumer wants her own apartment, but parents will not yet consider) 3. Prepare and leave for work on time each day without prompting (employer providing reinforcement by allowing consumer to leave work early for soccer practice one day each week if she has been on time for work each day that week) 4. In event of job loss, seek assistance from case manager in reapplying for SSI and Medical Assistance, applying for food stamps, and obtaining fuel and other financial assistance 5. In the event of job loss, seek assistance from Vocational Services in applying for unemployment benefits, finding a volunteer job, and seeking paid employment

CHAPTER II: INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT (continued)

> All "career development" goals related to "individual placements" in competitive job settings. In addition, of the six with plans who were employed in competitive jobs at the end of the Project year, only one wanted to stay in her present job until she retired.

> All nine Consumers with "safety net" plans delineated "career development" and/or "employment security" strategies which would entail further education or training, with seven specifying pursuit of literacy tutoring, adult education classes, and/or college courses.

> Six of the Consumers with plans specified "volunteer work" in various non-sheltered work settings as a career exploration and/or skills enhancement strategy for either "career development" or "employment security" purposes.

> All nine Consumers indicated that, in the event of job loss, they would, as needed, seek assistance from Alexandria vocational services staff and/or Department of Rehabilitative Services personnel in seeking and securing another job.

> All nine Consumers said that, in the event of job loss, they would, as needed, seek help from staff or family members in securing various types of benefits and services available to members of the general public who are unemployed and/or of limited means, including unemployment, food stamps, rent reduction, and/or utility assistance.

> In addition, "employment security" strategies of:

- Three Consumers included learning to budget and/or saving money;

- Two Consumers included learning to use public transportation; and

- One Consumer included securing a Section 8 rental certificate.

Further, it is to be noted that, according to Alexandria staff, few of these "safety net" goals or strategies matched those within the current "individual service plans" of Project Consumers, "plans" which:

> Are supposed to provide a "guideline" for the design and delivery of services, inclusive of "long-term goals", but by-and-large

> Are restricted to delineation of annual service goals which reflect continued Consumer reliance on the "rehabilitation system" for assistance and support.

Moreover, none of these nine Consumers, in the event they became unemployed, wanted to return to sheltered "rehabilitation" settings other than for reasons and assistance related specifically to securing:

> Another competitive job;

> Career education, training or volunteer work; and/or

> Financial and service benefits available to the public-at-large.

CHAPTER II: INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Finally, although only one Consumer included a "safety net" strategy for improving her housing situation, several others have expressed this desire and linked it to improving or maintaining their job situation.

In seven of the nine cases in which "safety net" plans have been developed, Consumers and Alexandria service staff feel that the planning process, in and of itself, has benefitted the Consumer by helping him/her to determine and/or clarify:

> His/her career goals and ways in which to pursue them making use of either "generic" and/or "rehabilitation" services; and

> What to do, where to go, and who to seek assistance from in the event of job loss.

The next and final section of this chapter describes to what extent and effect Consumers and the staff with whom they work enacted strategies from their "safety net" plans during the course of the Project.

2. **Consumer choice and use of "alternative" activities and resources** - Of the nine Project Consumers who developed "safety net" plans:

> Six demonstrated the ability to select from among and then pursue planned "career development" strategies. These six people chose and secured educational, training, tutoring, and/or volunteer work opportunities for "career exploration" and/or "skills enhancement" purposes making use of "generic" resources (e.g., college, adult education, literacy services) and, in several cases, services and/or funding available through the the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS).

> Four demonstrated the ability to select from among and then pursue planned "employment security" strategies, including three who developed and enacted savings plans and one who improved her housing situation by securing a Section 8 housing certificate. Accounting for the relative lack of activity in this regard is the fact that, whereas most "employment security" strategies related to what one will do in the event of unemployment, only one person became unemployed after developing his "safety net" plan and, in this case, he secured another job on his own with a period of weeks.

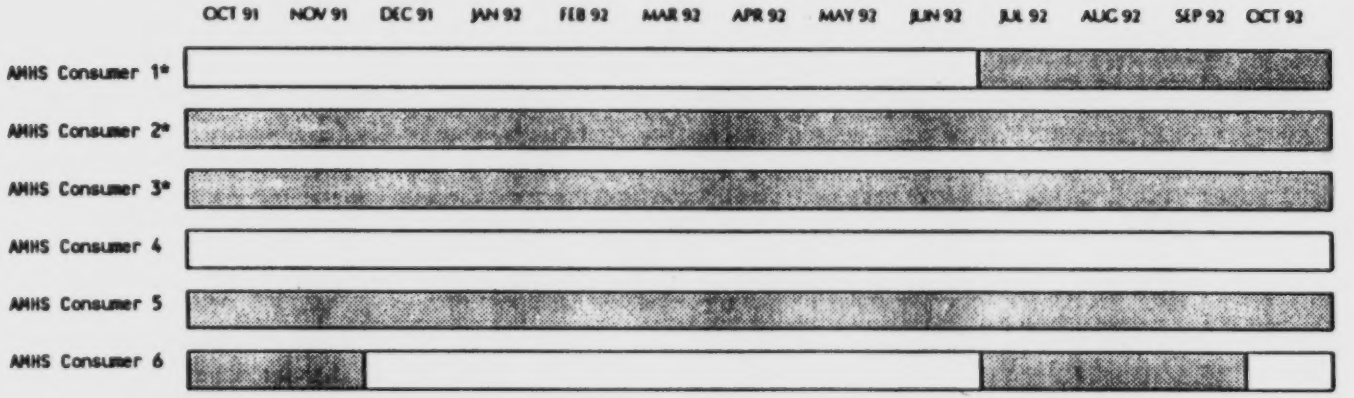
Finally, as illustrated in Table 2 on the following page, all nine Project Consumers who developed "safety net" plans (AMHS Consumers 1, 2, and 3 and all AMRS Consumers) either maintained (five) or enhanced (four) their employment status during the course of the Project year. Of the three Consumer participants who did not make such plans, two experienced a decline in employment status (both are currently unemployed) and one maintained his job, while picking up additional hours from one of the Consumers who lost his job.

From these short-term results, one cannot determine, with any degree of certainty, the extent to which planning and enacting personal "career development" and "employment security" strategies with consumers of supported employment services will:

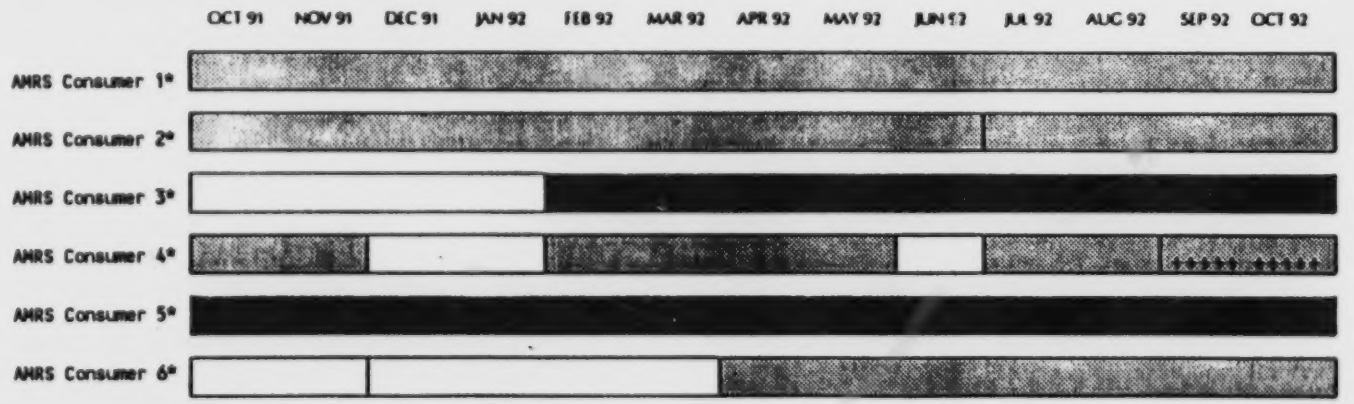
TABLE 2

ICON Employment Services
Safety Net Grant
Data Collected October 1991-October 1992
Periods of Employment/Unemployment/Volunteer Work

Alexandria Mental Health Participants



Alexandria Mental Retardation Services Participants



Key: = Paid Employment = Volunteer Work = Unemployed = Worked 2 Jobs

*Persons who developed "safety net" plans

CHAPTER II: INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT (continued)

> Reduce the occurrence or periods of unemployment or alleviate the negative consequences of job loss when it occurs; or

> Contribute to maintaining or enhancing their employment status.

Still, the individual Consumer stories which follow do provide some basis for making the claim that, for most consumers of supported employment (SE) services:

> There is a positive and abiding link between planning and preparing for one's employment future and maintaining or enhancing one's job situation; and

> The future they desire involves getting a better job than the one they have now and that they can work toward realizing this future by using the "rehabilitation system" to access and make use of resources outside of that system.

In short, SE services should and can be developed beyond the prevailing "seek/get/keep" orientation which presently prevails in the field.

a. AMHS Consumer 1, unemployed at the outset of the Project and initially reticent to participate, finally got together with AMHS and DRS staff in May 1992 to develop a "safety net" plan. One month later, the AMHS Work Force Employment Specialist found him his first job in over two years, as a full-time counter clerk at a convenience store. Following initial success on the job, he requested and received a transfer to a store closer to his residence. In part, this was so as to facilitate his taking the next step toward the career he desires in electronics, namely enrollment in a GED class at the Minnie Howard School, an adult education center.

   The Consumer's Case Manager feels that his long-range career choice may ultimately prove "too difficult" to attain. However, the Case Manager did note that the "safety net" plan brings this man "a little comfort and security" when he "begins to feel anxious" about the recent changes in his life. The Work Force Coordinator affirmed this by indicating that the plan has tied this man to "life goals of school and work in a more concrete way than has previously been done, which has contributed to his maintaining his position." The Case Manager more emphatically states: "I don't believe this would have happened without the Safety Nets Project."

b. AMHS Consumer 2, who at the onset of the Project was working, engaged to be married, and going to college, seemed to "know" where he was going and how he was going to get there. Indeed, his "safety net" plan, developed on April 9, 1992, seemed to reflect little more than what he was already doing. As planned, he has since gotten married and continued to work at his job while furthering his college studies. However, according to the Work Force Coordinator, the planning process "expanded his focus and gave him an actual direction in which to go and time for reflecting on the approaching change in his career". This does appear to be the case, for this man refers to his "safety net" plan as "my security blanket".

CHAPTER II: INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT (continued)

c. AMHS Consumer 3, as stipulated in the "career development" portion of her "safety net" plan of June 29, 1992, has since:

> Successfully completed a food handling and sanitation certificate course in which she enrolled with assistance from her Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) Counselor;

> Participated in a job interview class provided by DRS Comprehensive Employment Services; and

> Further explored career opportunities in the food service industry by going on several interviews for management positions, some of which were arranged by the Work Force Employment Specialist.

In addition, this Consumer has, as delineated in the "employment security" portion of her plan, secured a Section 8 housing certificate. Further, she says she has improved her resume and plans to take some more courses in "hotel, restaurant, and institutional management". Finally, she seems to have finally accepted the counsel she has been receiving from staff for quite some time, namely that she will have have "to take a lower-level job and work my way up" to a management position in food service.

However, the Work Force Employment Specialist does not see that the planning process has had "much impact as of yet", and with this the Consumer agrees. In fact, she "thought that the purpose of the plan was to find me another job" and, since she "is still doing the same thing I was doing before", she does not feel the Project was particularly helpful. Further, she says that "all the [safety net] goals were the same as before the plan was developed" and that she already knew "what resources are available if I lose a job". Still, she acknowledges that enrollment in the food handling course occurred "very quickly" and was "a positive thing" that she "probably would not have done otherwise". She also admits that it "will be hard to make a transition to another job. I am secure here and it's kind of scary going to a new place".

d. AMHS Consumer 4 initially expressed interest in Project participation and re-entering a career in the construction industry. In fact, with the help of Project and AMHS staff, he did enroll in a building trade course at the Minnie Howard School; however, he dropped out after one day and never followed through on developing a "safety net" plan. Shortly thereafter he was offered a full-time job at his place of employment, but, in approaching his 40th birthday, he increased his use of alcohol and illicit drugs, stopped seeing his substance abuse counselor and going to AA meetings, and spent several nights in a shelter. Finally, he was told that continued Clubhouse membership would be dependent upon his reentering a a detoxification program, which he did. However, he left the program after a few days and has not returned to the Clubhouse since, although staff have run into him on the street upon occasion.

e. AMHS Consumer 5 also initially expressed interest in Project participation and learning to read better, pursuing his GED, and securing

a better job situation. However, efforts to set up a "safety net" planning session never reached fruition. Still, he continued in his TEP for the entire year and, despite some poor performance reviews, had his hours increased when AMHS Consumer 5 lost his job there.

f. AMHS Consumer 6 lost his enclave position shortly after the Project started due to what was described as "poor job match". He returned to the Clubhouse and was due to enter the Project, but this was delayed to a recommended change in his medication regime and the consequent need for a period of "medical stabilization". The change in medications did not occur for several months, following by the required "adjustment period", after which he was referred for a three-month work assessment at a local rehabilitation agency where he took a liking to mailing and micrographics work. However, he took ill and was hospitalized in a psychiatric unit, returning to the Clubhouse in September. An unsuccessful attempt was made to set up a "safety net" planning session before the cessation of the Project. At last report, a volunteer job development had been assigned to look for a job in micrographics on behalf of this man.

g. AMRS Consumer 1 remained employed as a part-time receptionist at Vocational Services for the entire year. She developed her "safety net" plan on June 25, 1992, with support for her career development goal from her mother. At last report, she had been given some opportunity to work on expanding and improving her ability to use the FAX and copying machines, but only to a limited degree; however, plans were in the works for her enrollment in a typing class. The Consumer has not obtained a library card, and no one is certain if she is working on her Spanish her fluency in speaking Spanish. Staff had not been able to find anyone to teach her how to use public transportation, but she has begun to learn how to read bus schedules. Most importantly, the STEP Manager feels that the planning process has:

> ...made her start thinking about what she's going to do in the future...and opened her up to other options....She has always been very set in her ways....Everything had to be this way or that.... without change....Now she's looking down the road.

h. AMRS Consumer 2 remained employed as a salad bar attendant for the entirety of the Project year and developed her "safety net" plan on January 23, 1992. Although she appeared to have difficulty with the "career" concept, she agreed with her mother to consider a future job in clerical work. However, neither wished to pursue needed training in this regard at the time. However, late in the Project year, this Consumer expressed a desire to enroll in a typing class and activities were reportedly initiated toward this end. However, at an interview conducted in late November, during which she was decorating for Christmas, she indicated that she had lost her job just three days before and was awaiting services from a new job coach. Although understandably uncertain of her immediate plans, she remains interested in "learning about typing and filing".

CHAPTER II: INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT (continued)

i. AMRS Consumer 3, who had been unemployed for over a year, met with AMRS and Project staff at her home with her grandmother on December 16, 1991. As a result of the "career development" discussion that evening, the grandmother sought and secured her granddaughter a volunteer job at the American Women's Medical Association (AWMA) through a contact at church. She works three days a week, three hours a day and receives a DRS stipend of $1.90/hour for "unpaid work experience". Her performance has been such that AWMA has offered her more hours, but her grandmother's reply was that they could pay her if they wanted her to work more. AMRS staff have been pursuing this possibility, as yet without success.

   At a "safety net" planning session with the Consumer and her grandmother on August 27, 1992, a "career development" goal of paid employment in an office setting (preferably with AWMA) was formally established, along with related office skills enhancement strategies. During this session, the grandmother said that she was "very pleased with the progress" her granddaughter had made since starting her volunteer job and "the improvements in her socially and intellectually", noting she "seems to be more observant and willing to comment on things....and eager to see her co-workers." Similarly, her Placement Specialist says that the "volunteer job has made such a difference in her life. She is much more outgoing....smiles and looks at people, says hello....She used to be so shy."

j. AMRS Consumer 4 lost his job shortly after the Project started, but, with help from the AMRS/STEP Placement Specialist, secured another food service job two months later. A "safety net" planning session was held the next month, on March 23, 1992, during which he expressed interest in learning to read and cook, going out to meet people and do things in the community, and getting out of the food service industry, in which he was worked most of his life. However, when he was laid off in June, he got a new full-time food service within a month on his own. Worried about being laid off again and desirous of making more money so he could move into his own apartment, he got a second part-time job on his own at a kennel. In the meantime, after a long search with the local literacy council for a tutor to his liking, he began receiving reading instruction in October 1992.

   According to his Placement Specialist, the "Safety Nets Project" has made this Consumer "think about what he wants out of life, not just now, but in the future....He is a lot more responsible than before [and]....has been saving his money....which he hasn't done before. This perspective was certainly reflected in the Consumer's response to a question about whether he had discovered any new ways for dealing with unemployment over the past year, when he said: "Never leave a job without already having another one."

k. AMRS Consumer 5 was the first to develop a "safety nets" plan, in January 1992. Although his parents were active participants in the planning session, they subsequently declined staff efforts at enacting strategies for improving their son's reading and writing skills, getting him involved in recreational activities outside of the

"rehabilitation system", and having him reapply for Supplemental Security Income. However, in response to advice they received with respect to pursuing the EEO complaint alleging discrimination in the lay-off of their son, they subsequently secured the *pro bono* legal services to assist them in the matter. In response, the Federal government did offer this Consumer another job, but with duties more varied and over a larger work area and in a harder-to-reach location than the job he held before. For good reasons, his parents rejected this offer, so negotiations continue while their son remains doing volunteer work, reportedly wondering why he is cannot work for pay.

1. AMRS Consumer 6, with the assistance of her STEP Placement Specialist, finally got a full-time job as an office clerk in March 1992 after being unemployed for over a year. She describes it as "the best job I've ever had" and "the perfect place for me" and says she wants to work there "the rest of my life". Her "safety net" plan, developed in the month after she started work, reflects this goal, including strategies for getting to work on time, improving her clerical skills, and saving money for retirement.

   With respect to the tardiness problem, her supervisor has worked out a reportedly successful system whereby if the Consumer is on time every day for a week, she gets to leave work early on the day she has soccer practice. She remains interested in taking a typing class, but her eight-hour work day, coupled with two hours of travel time to-and-from the job site and an active social life (inclusive of parties with people at work), does not leave her a lot of free time.

   Not reflected in her "safety net" plan is a very strong desire to "get into my own place in the community where I can make my own decisions and live the way I want to", a desire not shared by her parents. She currently lives in an AMRS supervised apartment which she says "staff inspect all the time"....[and] want to help me every step of the way". She is afraid of being "kicked out" of the residential program because of an ongoing dispute with staff over the manner in which she keeps her apartment, apparently not up to the standards established by licensing authorities.

CHAPTER III: STAFF, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter begins with a brief description of the organizations and staff who directly participated in the Northern Virginia Supported Employment "Safety Nets" Project. The second section provides a summary overview of the services delivered by the Project's Employment Security Specialist with the intent of providing vocational services staff of Alexandria Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services with increased knowledge and capabilities with respect to developing and implementing individual "safety net" plans and making use of "alternative" resources and activities. The third section describes the nature and extent of the work engaged in by the Project's Alexandria Focus Group and Northern Virginia Safety Nets Committee, which constituted the principal mechanisms for extending and expanding the impact of the Project beyond the individual Consumer and staff participants. The final section summarily presents information and perceptions as to the actual and potential influence of the Project upon design and delivery of supported employment services in Alexandria and elsewhere in Northern Virginia.

A. Organizational and Staff Participants

1. **ICON Employment Services** (ICON) - ICON is a private, non-for-profit corporation, founded in 1985 for the purpose of "supporting individuals with severe disabilities in integrated work settings" and involved in design and delivery of training, technical assistance, and direct services in the field of supported employment, primarily in Northern Virginia. The two principal ICON staff involved in the Project were the:

   a. Project Director, Harriet S. Yaffe, who is the Executive Director of ICON. She managed the Project on a day-to-day basis, directly supervised the Project's Employment Security Specialist (ESS), participated in monthly update meetings with the ESS and Project Evaluator, and chaired and recorded the minutes of all meetings of the Alexandria Focus Group and Safety Nets Committee.

   b. Project Employment Security Specialist (ESS), Jennifer Orlick, the only full-time staff person assigned to the Project, whose functions are described later in this chapter (see Section B) and who also participated in all meetings with the Alexandria Focus Group and Safety Nets Committee.

2. **Alexandria Community Services Board** (CSB) - The Alexandria CSB is a 15-member volunteer group with State-mandated authority over funding and policy direction of the City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse (DMHMRSA). DMHMRSA houses the two program operations from which Project Consumers were targeted, namely, the Alexandria Mental Health Services Community Support Program and the Alexandria Mental Retardation Services Vocational Services Program..

   a. Alexandria Mental Health Services (AMHS) - The AMHS Community Support Program provides an array of psychosexual rehabilitation services, with its day support service operation (the Patrick Street Clubhouse) providing advocacy, case management, pre-vocational, vocational, medication management, substance abuse prevention, recreation, and family support and education services. The principal AMHS staff involved in the Project were:

> Larry Katz, the Work Force (formerly Vocational Services) Program Coordinator, who represented AMHS on the Project Focus Group and Safety Nets Committee, provided direct services to the six AMHS Consumers involved in the Project, helped develop "safety net" plans with three of these people, and was, at the outset of the Project, the only Clubhouse staff member with responsibility for design, delivery, and monitoring of employment-related services to 49 of the 120 Clubhouse Members.

> Angelishea Ferrell, who was retained as the Work Force Program Employment Specialist in the Summer of 1992 and subsequently provided direct services to two of the Project Consumers.

In addition, one AMHS Case Manager, Les Richardson, was directly involved in "safety net" planning activities, although all six Clubhouse Case Managers were oriented to the "safety net" concept.

b. Alexandria Mental Retardation Services (AMRS) - The AMRS Vocational Services Program offers both sheltered work and supported employment (SE) services to 58 individuals. The six AMRS Project Consumers were from its Entec and STEP (Supported Training and Employment Program) operations. The former provides individual and small group SE services for people in of need long-term on-the-job training and support, while the latter provides individual SE services for people with less intensive training and support needs. However, all those who became Project Consumers essentially became STEP Consumers. The principal AMRS staff involved in the "Safety Nets" Project were:

> Gwen Sither, Director, and David Miller, Assistant Director, Vocational Services, who served on the Project Focus Group and Safety Nets Committee;

> Victoria Butterfield, Manager, STEP and (for all but the first few months of the Project) Entec, who served on the Project Focus Group, coordinated and participated in all "safety net" planning meetings, and provided direct support services to the AMRS Project Consumers on an as-needed basis; and

> Patricia Butler and Karen Slade, STEP Placement Specialists, who provided job development and employment support services to four of the AMRS Project Consumers and were involved in development of their "safety net" plans.

As the Project was ending, AMRS case management services were being realigned so as to provide more support to Consumers of Vocational Services.

3. **Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment Steering Committee** - The Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment Steering Committee is a 15-member group originally established in 1987 under chairmanship of the ICON Executive Director for the purpose of directing design and delivery of regional SE training and technical assistance services then being financed through the now defunct Virginia Office of Supported Employment as part of a five-year, state-wide "systems change" grant

program. Since the program ended in 1990, the Committee has continued to meet quarterly and includes staff representatives of:

> Community Services Boards (CSBs) of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax-Falls Church, Loudoun County, and Prince William County;

> Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center; and

> Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services.

The Steering Committee established its Safety Nets Committee in late 1989, which originated, studied, and developed the conceptual framework and methodological underpinnings for what became the "Safety Nets" Project proposal. At the onset of the Project, the Safety Nets Committee was chaired by Michael Sotak, Office of Mental Health Services, Fairfax/Falls Church CSB, and included:

> Larry Katz, Alexandria CSB Mental Health Services;

> David Lambelet, Loudoun County CSB Mental Retardation Services;

> Karen Mellon, Fairfax/Falls Church CSB Mental Retardation Services;

> David Miller, Alexandria CSB Mental Retardation Services;

> Kelly Mullins, Arlington Community Residences, Inc. (ACRI);

> April Pinch, Job Discovery, Fairfax, Virginia;

> Gwen Sither, Alexandria CSB Mental Retardation Services; and

> Harriet Yaffe, ICON Employment Services.

During the course of the Project year, Mr. Sotak left his position at the Fairfax/Falls Church CSB and was replaced as the Safety Nets Committee Chairperson by Ms. Yaffe. Also, during the Project year, the following persons joined the Safety Nets Committee:

> Sharon Bender, Prince William County CSB Mental Health Services,;

> Joanne Orchant, Supported Employment, St. John's Community Services;

> Geronimo Robinson, ACRI; and

> Sandy Rounds Pullara, Arlington Bureau of Mental Retardation.

B. Staff Development Strategies

1. **Overview** - As previously noted, the direct service staff principally targeted for "safety net" knowledge and skills enhancement were those of Alexandria Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services. As originally proposed, the primary strategy enacted for development of their knowledge and skills was the "hands-on", field-based work of the Project's Employment Security Specialist (ESS) with respect to "safety net"

planning and resource development. In addition, the ESS did provide some orientation training for case management personnel in both service operations. In developing "generic" resources and "rehabilitation" services, the ESS did, in some cases, work directly with individual Project Consumers and/or the Alexandria staff who serve them to help in accessing such. For the most part, however, the ESS fulfilled the intended support role of:

> Providing Alexandria personnel with the information they needed to pursue these resources and services with and on the behalf of the people they serve; and

> Monitoring access and service delivery progress and helping address any access or service delivery problems which arose.

2. **Development of "safety net" planning capabilities** The ESS participated in all nine of the Project's "safety net" planning meetings and wrote up all but one of the resulting plans. These planning sessions directly involved a total of five staff from AMRS and two from AMHS. Over the course of the Project year, the ESS, with feedback from AMRS and AMHS staff, designed and refined a "standard" introduction, process, and format for development of the individual "safety net (career development and employment security)" plan. This "package", inclusive of a "sample" plan, is included in Attachment 1 to this report.

3. **Development of "generic" and "rehabilitation" resources** - Over the course of the Project year, the ESS worked on developing "generic" and "rehabilitation" resources in six areas related to the "career development" and "employment security" needs of Project Consumers. The results from this work are summarized below and presented in the form of a "Safety Nets Project Resource List" included as Attachment 2 to this report.

   a. Volunteer sites and sources - Of the nine Project consumers who developed "safety net" plans, six included career development and/or employment security strategies involving use of volunteer jobs to either explore career interests and/or develop skills related to these interests. The ESS explored 15 different sites and sources for volunteer work, with representatives from five agreeing to work with Alexandria staff and consumers in the event of a need for volunteer employment opportunities. One of these, the Alexandria City Library (which had already been developed by AMRS staff), was utilized by two Project Consumers, and a volunteer job site for another Project Consumer was developed by a member of her family and AMRS staff.

   b. Service agencies - Of the nine Project Consumers who developed "safety net" plans:

      > All delineated "career development" and/or "employment security" strategies involving the use of vocational services; and

      > Three specified strategies for expanding or enhancing social and recreational opportunities.

Some family members and Alexandria staff also cited desires for information about other types of support services available in Northern Virginia.

With respect to implementation of vocational service strategies, the Project ESS was in large measure responsible for facilitating the re-establishment of a working supported employment relationship between Alexandria Mental Health Services (AMHS) and the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS). As a result, a DRS Counselor "opened" the cases of several AMHS Consumers, participated with AMHS staff and three Project Consumers in development of their "safety net" plans, and assisted one Consumer in enrolling in a food handling and sanitation certificate course and a DRS Comprehensive Education Services class in job interviewing. In addition, the DRS Counselor and AMRS staff assisted one Consumer who secured a volunteer job during the Project in procuring a DRS "unpaid work experience" stipend of $1.90 per hour.

The Project ESS also identified and explored 19 other public and private service agencies and sites in the Northern Virginia area which provide legal, vocational, recreational, counseling, and/or other support services; of these, seven provide one or more of these services exclusively to persons with disabilities. Five of these 19 resources expressed interest in assisting Project Consumers, and several were further explored by Alexandria personnel. However, none of the Consumers elected to make use of the services they offer during the course of the Project year.

c. Educational opportunities - All nine Project Consumers who developed "safety net" plans delineated "career development" or "employment security" strategies which would entail further education or training, one of whom was already enrolled at George Mason University. The Project ESS identified and explored a number of other sources of educational and training opportunities in Northern Virginia, including DRS Comprehensive Education Services, the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, and the Minnie Howard School, an adult education center. Four Project Consumers began courses, classes, or tutoring offered by these resources, one of whom completed the course and class in which she enrolled. Of the other three, one dropped out of the course he started, while one continues literacy tutoring and another remains enrolled in a GED course.

d. Networking resources - The Project ESS identified and explored three "networks" which might be used by rehabilitation agencies to facilitate a better "systemic" response to the "career development" and "employment security" needs of consumers of supported employment services. These were the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Community Vocational Consortium, and Employer Advisory Committee of the Virginia Employment Commission.

e. Unemployment resources - Although all 12 Consumer participants had been unemployed on one or more occasions during their work careers, only three had ever made use of benefits and services available from the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). Interviews with staff and

Consumers indicated that one of the primary reasons for this was the difficulties which they had experienced in trying to apply for these benefits and services. Accordingly, the ESS invested considerable time with representatives from the regional VEC office in determining how to best gain access to its benefits and services, the result of which was "Guidelines for Completing Unemployment Paperwork", included as Attachment 3 to this report. One Project Consumer did become unemployed after developing his "safety net" plan, but secured a new job shortly thereafter and did not apply for unemployment benefits. However, AMRS staff say that the "Guidelines" have helped them to assist other Vocational Services Consumers in securing unemployment benefits and services.

The Project ESS also identified and explored seven other public and private resources available to assist people who are unemployed in addressing vocational, housing, and/or other support needs. None of the Consumers made use of these resources during the course of the Project.

4. **Other staff development strategies** - The Project ESS oriented AMHS case management personnel to the principles and practices of supported employment and the Safety Nets Project. She also met with Clubhouse personnel on a number of occasions during the Project year to discuss difficulties being encountered in the design and delivery of services in these areas. In addition, the ESS helped to orient and train the AMHS Work Force Employment Specialist when she was hired during the Summer of 1992. Finally, the ESS provided an "safety net" orientation to the AMRS Case Managers who were assigned to Vocational Services late in the Project year.

C. <u>Organizational and Systems Development Strategies</u>

1. **Alexandria Focus Group** - The Alexandria Focus Group met on 11 occasions between October 22, 1991, and October 2, 1992. As intended, the Group reviewed strategic implementation progress and problems on a regular basis and assisted the Project Employment Security Specialist (ESS) in identifying, prioritizing, and resolving operational problems in her work with and on the behalf of Project Consumers. This problem-solving process was:

   > Most effective with respect to AMRS Vocational Services due to the relative autonomy of its operations and the number and variety of staff representatives involved in Focus Group activities. The only major unresolved problem which emerged during the year had to do with the relative inability of Vocational Services staff to access and utilize AMRS case management services, which were operationally tied to AMRS Residential Services. However, just prior to the end of the Project, a solution to this problem had begun to emerge with the assignment of two AMRS Case Managers to Vocational Services.

   > Much less effective with AMHS Vocational Services due to the fact that such involved only one staff member for all but the last few months of the Project and this person worked within the context of a Clubhouse operation which did begin to place much emphasis upon

employment-related outcomes until near the end of the Project. In fact, it was not until the hiring of a Work Force Employment Specialist during the Summer of 1992 that AMHS even had the staffing capability to provide supported employment services. Moreover, despite the orientation training of AMHS case management staff, who are assigned to and housed within Clubhouse operations, only one actually took part in "safety net" planning activity.

Finally, the Focus Group assisted the Project Evaluator in answering the Project's summative and formative evaluation questions during its final two meetings in September and October 1992.

2. **Northern Virginia Safety Nets Committee** - The Safety Nets Committee met on eight occasions between October 1, 1991, and October 20, 1992, and held its most recent meeting on December 16, 1992. During the first half of the Project year, the Committee focused upon "finalizing" its "safety nets paper", the original draft of which had provided the conceptual basis for the "Safety Nets Project". The "finished" paper (see Attachment 4) was disseminated to Northern Virginia supported employment service providers, but garnished only minimal response other than from some mental health service providers who felt it did not adequately identify and address the needs of their consumers.

   In response, the Committee conducted a "safety nets" survey similar to one it had conducted prior to the Project, this one being of 23 mental health vocational services consumers. Compared to results from the pre-Project survey, which were primarily from consumers of mental retardation supported employment services (83%):

   > Nearly twice as many mental health consumers (83% to 43%) had experienced periods of unemployment;

   > More (48% to 30%) had had staff talk with them about unemployment before it occurred;

   > Many more (43% to none) had not had access to supported employment services;

   > Five times as many (30% to 5%) said that "loss of benefits" would be one of their "biggest problems" if they lost their job; and

   > Seven times as many (52% to 7%) said they would return to "sheltered" service operations (e.g., clubhouse) until they found another job.

   However, survey results were quite similar with respect to:

   > The "biggest problem" to be faced in the event of job loss, namely, lack of money (52% to 57%);

   > The percentage of people who would want to do volunteer work until they found another job (57% to 46%); and

   > What individuals would want to "happen first" if they lost a job, namely, "get another job right away" (70% to 65%).

CHAPTER III: STAFF, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Although these results basically validated the conceptual base and general content of the "safety nets paper", they did elucidate some significant differences between the service and benefit situations of mental health and mental retardation consumers in the event of unemployment. However, at this juncture, a revision of the "safety nets paper" so as to more adequately reflect these differences does not appear to be in the offering.

Finally, at its last two meetings, the Safety Nets Committee gave some consideration as to how to broaden the impact of the Safety Nets Project beyond Alexandria. Representatives from each of the service agencies and organizations involved have tentatively committed to piloting the development of five "safety net" plans with consumers of their services, and one has tentatively contracted with ICON to facilitate this process.

3. **Supported employment "safety net" funding study** - In the City of Alexandria, as in most other jurisdictions in Virginia, supported employment services for persons with mental retardation or mental illness are funded in two phases, with:

   > The initial, "transitional" service (situational assessment, job development, and initial placement, training, and followalong support) funded by the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), with some flexibility as to the intensity and length of this service, but rather severe restrictions on job development hours; and

   > The "long-term" support service, inclusive of case management, funded by the Community Service Board.

   At the onset of the Project, it was generally believed by Safety Nets Committee members that, in the event a supported employment consumer lost a job for reasons related to his/her own performance or behavior, DRS would not re-open his/her case for a year. Inquiries by Project staff with State-level authorities revealed this to be a common practice rather than DRS "policy". However, this left open the question of how much of the activity being engaged in by the Project Employment Security Specialist (ESS) on behalf of Project Consumers would be covered under existing supported employment funding mechanisms.

   From January 7 through April 7, 1992, the Project ESS tracked hours of direct and indirect service to Project Consumers and, based upon present DRS and Alexandria CSB supported employment billing guidelines, determined which of her services were:

   > "Billable hours" including direct and indirect "intervention time" spent in relation to consumer-specific assessment, job development, and service coordination activities and related travel; and

   > "Non-billable hours" including time related to non-consumer-specific job and service development activities, including development of volunteer sites and generic resources, liaison and coordination of services, and other Project-related "safety net" activities.

For the 358 hours of Project-related services the ESS delivered over this period of time, only 69.5 hours, or about 20%, were "billable" under existing supported employment billing guidelines.

D. Staff, Organizational, and Systems Development Outcomes

1. **Alexandria Mental Retardation Services** (AMRS) - AMRS Vocational Services staff developed six individual "safety net" plans and made use of "alternative activities and resources" in implementing three of them, with at least two others apparently prepared to do so as the Project was ending. Further, during the Project year, the employment status of four of the six Project Consumers was improved, while the status of the other two was maintained. Moreover, whereas eight AMRS supported employment consumers were unemployed and "doing nothing" at the onset of the Project, by the end of the Project year this was true of only one person.

   One member of the AMRS Vocational Services management team reports that, as a result of their participation in the Project, staff are "more excited about their jobs" and:

   > "Know more about...and have a better understanding of what people want to do";

   > "Have more open and honest relationships with the people served and their families";

   > "Have a better understanding of issues which may cause unemployment [prior to its occurrence]"; and

   > "Have information to overcome the fear of unemployment and a fairly good knowledge of resources to use during periods of unemployment".

   Another AMRS Vocational Services manager says that the Project "has just opened our eyes to what people think about doing....[and] doors as to what we can help people to achieve." This manager further notes that the Project has "given us permission to do other things....to look beyond the present job into the future....and make better use of other resources available in the community".

   Finally, one of the involved AMRS Placement Specialists says that the Project "helped clarify service provider roles in meeting client needs when their situation changes" and "formalized things we had considered in the past, but not always done". Moreover, it has "gotten more people involved", thereby giving "more protection to the client", while at the same time making "clients more responsible for themselves". As a result, this staff member feels positively about the fact that: "I'm not everything to the client anymore and don't have to be."

   During the course of the Project, AMRS Vocational Services staff identified three major barriers to successful development and implementation of "safety net" plans, including difficulties in relation to:

CHAPTER III: STAFF, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

> Engaging AMRS case management personnel in the "safety net" planning and implementation process, such that Vocational Services staff often had to address Consumer needs related to, but outside of the employment arena. It was duly noted, however, that AMRS case management personnel were operationally attached to Residential Services, had "large case loads" which had been changed during the year, and "were swamped" with duties, most particularly those having to do with the conversion of AMRS Consumers to Medicaid funding.

> Orienting some family members to the "safety net" concept and getting them involved in the planning and implementation process. It was noted that the concept was "new" to family members, perhaps "too much to take in at just one meeting", and "different in many respects" from their prior experience in developing individual service plans.

> Taking "more of a whole life" approach to the planning process, that is, "looking not just at the job", but "expanding out to other areas and getting more people involved" beyond just AMRS staff and members of Consumer families. Although this approach was seen as essentially positive, "safety net" planning did "go a bit slower" than individual service planning, particularly because the Project targeted "those who've had the most difficulty keeping their jobs", some of whom had difficulty with the concept of "long-term planning".

Despite these difficulties, AMRS Vocational Services intends to develop "safety net" provisions within the individual service plan (ISP) of each of its 58 consumers of supported employment services over the coming year as their plans come due for redevelopment. Relative to this process:

> To facilitate consumer and family member understanding and involvement, the "safety net" concept will be introduced at the annual interdisciplinary team meeting for each consumer, where a "career goal" will be determined. However, "career development" and "employment security" strategies will not be developed until the first quarterly review meeting of the team.

> Case management involvement should be much less problematic, as two AMRS Case Managers have now been assigned to Vocational Services. However, there will need to be a further clarification of case management roles and functions.

In summary, as a result of participation in the "Safety Nets" Project, AMRS Vocational Services personnel clearly demonstrated "increased knowledge and capabilities" with respect to both:

> "Identifying consumer career development and employment security needs"; and

> "Developing and using alternative activities and resources to anticipate and address these needs".

Further, they are are in the process of "effecting changes in their supported employment system" and, in so doing, have begun to "demonstrate a replicable model for more efficiently and effectively addressing the career development and employment security needs" of the people they serve. Initial furtherance of these changes is in part possible due to the fact that AMRS Vocational Services is a public, "facility-based" operation providing both sheltered work and supported employment services. Accordingly, it is able to access and use staff and other resources in a somewhat more flexible manner than would be possible within a private agency which provides only supported employment services and must rely solely on monies available for supported employment purposes. Even given this fact and the intent to increase use of generic services and natural supports, however, present funding levels are probably insufficient to address the "safety net" needs of all Consumers of AMRS supported employment services or to extend the concept to its sheltered workshop service operation.

2. **Alexandria Mental Health Services** - AMHS staff assisted three Clubhouse Members in developing "safety net" plans, all three of whom made use of "generic" resources in implementing their "career development" and "employment security" strategies. Further, over the Project year, the employment status of one of these persons improved dramatically, with the status of the other two remaining essentially the same, while all three pursued educational and training opportunities. However, "safety net" plans were not developed with the other three persons targeted by the Project, for a combination of personal and programmatic reasons. With respect to the latter, AMHS staff made the following observations at the end of the Project year:

> "Over the past two years, we've been re-tooling the Clubhouse....We have spent a great deal of time implementing Medicaid regulations.... Only in the past few months was vocational made a priority....along with supported employment....Some of the older staff are comfortable taking care of people....Members sometimes have difficulty in being future oriented....Case Managers hate to put Members in stressful situations, in particular jobs."

> "Traditionally, when Members tried out jobs and they didn't work out, it was back to the Clubhouse and don't try again...,Case Managers have always been hesitant to refer people for vocational services....to avoid stress, relapse....A problem is one of our major [success] indicators has to do with keeping people out of the hospital....This has been overcome somewhat, but Case Managers were slow to become invested [in the Safety Nets project]....[and] we didn't pick Members from every Case Manager's group."

> "When someone loses a job, it's looked at as major, but there's always the fallback of the Clubhouse....At the start, there was some resistance to the Project because it was perceived of as a paperwork exercise, something we already do....[But] It was haphazard....not structured....Case Managers were doing it with some members, but not others....When we picked [Consumer] participants, we only covered half of the Case Managers....When we started the Project, we didn't have a job coach; we couldn't do supported employment."

CHAPTER III: STAFF, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

> "Our priority is to maintain persons in the community through whatever means necessary....Some Members are complacent....[and] comfortable with the Clubhouse....If employment is identified as a need for stability, it's supposed to get priority....[But] It's only been in the past year that we've regained an interface with DRS....and that Work Force has become fully staffed."

> "A year ago [when the Project started] our focus was on Medicaid standards and paperwork. We've finally got that under control.... There has definitely been heightened interest in employment outcomes and services in the past six months."

In point of fact, AMHS staff feel that the Safety Nets Project has been in part responsible for the increased vocational emphasis referenced above, as well as for bringing employment-related concerns and resources more to the forefront of programming:

> "It has made a difference....increased the employment consciousness of staff....The employment process has become more efficient.... Jennifer [the Employment Security Specialist] has asked people more questions, beaten the pavement, and held people to be accountable... Safety Nets has helped to focus and coordinate services."

> "It has given us another facet to look at and consider as we begin a vocational plan....and for people who are working, anticipates what will happen if they lose their jobs....The DRS role has been clarified....with increased participation in work units....Jennifer identified links [in the community] that we knew about, but didn't know we could access."

> "DRS hadn't sponsored anyone here in several years....got involvement from DRS which we hadn't had before....She opened our eyes to doing situational assessments....identified resources available outside in the community....helped orient the Case Managers and Angie [the new Employment Specialist]....opened my eyes and interest in developing 'safety nets' around the Clubhouse as a whole, as well as within individual service plans."

As a result, the Work Force Coordinator intends to continue "piloting" the "safety net" planning process with Work Force Consumers over the coming year, but to keep it separate from ISP development for the time being so as to be able to:

> "Compare what happens in regular [ISP] meetings with what happens in 'safety nets' meetings";

> "Identify fears and needs related to getting a job.... and planning for disaster";

> Further "define roles, relationships, and responsibilities" in the employment process; and

> Develop "cooperation and commitment from everyone working with a particular individual".

CHAPTER III: STAFF, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT (continued)

His supervisor notes that the process "will have to evolve" and must involve "educating Members and all the staff" and "making sure that everyone has a part in putting plans together, implementing them, and then revising them". But he definitely does see the future of the Clubhouse as "moving to more of an employment orientation", with which his supervisor concurs, saying: "We're no longer stalled; we're moving....We have really begun to focus on employment, and we know we can do a helluva lot better."

Thus, the "Safety Nets" Project does appear to have increased the knowledge and capabilities of some AMHS staff with respect to identifying "career development" and "employment security" needs and addressing them with "alternative activities and resources" and heightened the awareness of a number of other staff in this regard. Certainly, the "safety nets" planning and resource development process has not evolved in the AMHS Clubhouse to the point where it can be said to have demonstrated a replicable change in the service delivery system, but the potential and desire for such change seem to exist. In addition, as a "facility-based" operation with in-house case management services and a two-person employment service, the AMHS Work Force Program does appear to have the initial flexibility to realign personnel and other resources so as to promote employment outcomes without additional funding.

Still, there are a number of attitudinal barriers to be overcome among both staff and Members, and there does need to be further clarification and agreement as to the nature and degree of support to be provided by various service personnel and other persons in the lives of Members. Moreover, Member demand for employment-related services is sufficiently great so as to possibly mitigate against development of a "true" supported employment capacity. Within the first three months of being hired, the Employment Specialist had received 15 referrals and placed nine people in "mostly low-skill positions", most of whom had required no more than one day of her time on the job and follow-along in the form of weekly "drop-in" and/or telephone contact. Obviously, being responsible for this number of people will limit the amount of service she can provide in the event any of these people comes to require more support to either sustain or improve their employment situations, as well as the availability of service to people who need more support just to secure a job in the first place.

3. **ICON Employment Services** - Following the end of the "Safety Nets" Project, its Employment Security Specialist assumed a newly-created position within ICON, designed to facilitate efficient and effective coordination and funding of supported employment services. Part of her job has involved orienting ICON personnel to design and use of the "safety net" planning and resource development process she refined during the Project year. In effect, the system developed with Alexandria Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services is being adopted by ICON for its own supported employment service operation. This includes use of the system with survivors of brain injury being served in Project CIRCLE (Capitalizing on Individual Residual Capacities so that Life is Enhanced), a three-year demonstration project which ICON has recently initiated with funding from the United States Office of Special

Education and Rehabilitative Services. Although the grant covers the cost of using the "safety net" planning and resource development system with Project CIRCLE consumers, the question of funding for "career development" and "employment security" strategies under existing DRS and CSB supported employment billing guidelines for other individuals with severe disabilities in Northern Virginia remains very much unanswered.

4. **Northern Virginia supported employment service delivery system** - The Arlington Bureau of Mental Retardation, which has a representative on the Safety Nets Committee, has tentatively contracted with ICON to provide 14 hours of "planning" service to assist in developing "safety net" plans with five of its consumers of supported employment services. In addition, representatives from other Northern Virginia agencies represented on the Safety Nets Committee have made tentative commitments to "pilot" development of "safety net" plans with five consumers each. Moreover, members of the Committee have expressed a desire to continue their work as a group in the coming year.

   Despite these developments, the impact of the "Safety Nets" Project upon the design and delivery of supported employment services in Northern Virginia has been primarily one of heightened awareness among representatives of the private and public providers represented on the Safety Nets Committee. The Committee members are basically mid-level management personnel with limited ability to influence CSB policy and funding, and efforts to involve representatives of the Department of Rehabilitative Services on the Committee were unsuccessful. Without some mechanism for funding "pilot" ventures by other jurisdictions, it would appear that extension of the "safety nets" orientation throughout the region will be a lengthy process reliant upon the ideological commitment of a select number of supported employment provider representatives to better addressing the career development and employment support needs of the people they serve.

5. **Other service delivery providers and systems** - During the course of the Project, the Project Evaluator did present information on the "safety nets" planning system to staff of the Melwood Horticultural Training Center "Home-of-Your-Own (HOYO)" Project, a supported living conversion demonstration "project of national significance" funded by the United States Administration on Developmental Disabilities and operating in Southern Maryland. As a result, the Melwood HOYO Project has adopted a "safety nets" component into its "personal futures plans" to assist consumers in developing the resources and supports needed to control and maintain the housing and support service situations which they are developing through participation in the project.

   Finally, the Project Director, Employment Security Specialist, and Evaluator made a presentation on the "Safety Nets" Project at the 1992 Conference of The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps in San Francisco, California. Over 50 people attended the presentation, and nearly a dozen persons from both within and outside of the United States asked for further information on the Project.

IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter summarizes results and conclusions from a third-party evaluation of the Northern Virginia Supported Employment "Safety Nets" Demonstration Project. The Project had its origins in late 1989, when the Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment Steering Committee identified "safety net" issues (what happens to supported employment consumers when they lose their jobs) as one of the priority concerns of its 15 member agencies. This resulted in establishment of a Safety Nets Committee, which, on the basis of a subsequent survey of supported employment providers in the region, developed and distributed a "working position paper on supported employment safety net issues" in April 1990. The Committee then conducted a survey of supported employment consumers as to knowledge and concerns with respect to the prospect of unemployment, results of which were compiled and distributed in September 1990. The Committee used the results from this work to develop a proposal for a "safety nets" demonstration project in cooperation with ICON and the Alexandria (VA) Community Services Board (CSB), which was funded by a grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

A. Purpose

The principal purpose of the Northern Virginia Supported Employment "Safety Nets" Demonstration Project was:

> To demonstrate an innovative and systemic approach to making more effective and efficient use of existing public and private resources to meet the career development and employment security needs of people in supported employment.

B. Participants

The Project involved 12 Consumers of services provided by the City of Alexandria (VA) Community Services Board (CSB), including:

- Six persons served by the Supported Training and Employment Program (STEP) operated by Vocational Services of Alexandria Mental Retardation Services (AMRS); and
- Six Members of the Patrick Street Clubhouse and its Work Force Program operated by Alexandria Mental Health Services (AMHS).

Consumer participants were either unemployed or had a history of being unemployed for extended periods of time. The Project was directed and operated by ICON (Industrial Concepts of Northern Virginia) Employment Services. Oversight and monitoring were provided by the Safety Nets Committee of the Northern Virginia Regional Supported Employment (SE) Steering Committee. Evaluation design and implementation activities were coordinated by Wurzbacher and Associates (WAA) of Takoma Park, Maryland.

C. Principal Strategies

ICON retained an Employment Security Specialist (ESS) for one year to assist in design, delivery, and coordination of services to the 12 Project Consumers. The ESS had two primary functions to be carried out in a complementary fashion with service delivery by Alexandria CSB staff:

IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

> To work with the SE Consumer and significant others in his/her life in fashioning an individual career development and employment security plan (commonly referred to as a "safety nets" plan); and

> To identify, broker, coordinate, and assist in accessing and monitoring use of existent public and private services and resources, inclusive of "natural supports", to meet needs identified in "safety nets" plans.

Emphasis was placed upon development, use, and coordination of existing resources, both "generic" and specific to persons with disabilities, and use of "natural supports".

During the Project, an Alexandria Focus Group met once a month to discuss and determine:

> Individual Consumer progress toward goal achievement, barriers to such, and strategies for overcoming them; and

> Implications for expanding the use of "safety nets" strategies to other Consumers of Alexandria CSB services.

The regional Safety Nets Committee met on a bi-monthly basis to hear outcomes from implementation of Project strategies and discuss implications for expanding the use of such strategies throughout Northern Virginia.

D. Consumer Development

1. **Consumer knowledge of needs and choices of activities and resources** - Nine Project Consumers developed "safety net" plans, the goals and strategies of which clearly demonstrated increased Consumer "knowledge of their career development and employment security needs" and the "alternative activities and resources available to meet these needs". To summarize the content of the nine "safety net" plans:

   > All contained "career development" goals related to individual jobs in competitive work settings, with only one of the six persons in a competitive job at the end of the Project year desiring to retire in her present position.

   > All nine plans delineated "career development" and/or "employment security" strategies which would entail further education or training, with seven specifying pursuit of literacy tutoring, adult education classes, and/or college courses.

   > Six of the plans specified "volunteer work" in various competitive work settings as career exploration and/or skills enhancement strategies.

   > All nine plans indicated that, in the event of job loss, the Consumer would, as needed, seek assistance in securing another job, as well as benefits and services available to members of the general public who are unemployed and/or of limited means, including unemployment, food stamps, rent reduction, and/or utility assistance.

IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

Few "safety net" goals or strategies matched those within the current "individual service plans" of Project Consumers. Moreover, none of these Consumers, in the event they became unemployed, wanted to return to sheltered "rehabilitation" settings other than for reasons related specifically to enacting their career development and/or employment security strategies.

Finally, despite the employment orientation of the Project, several Consumers cited strategies for increasing social or recreational activity in the community and, although only one included a "safety net" strategy for improving her housing situation, a number of others expressed this desire in interviews or conversations and linked it to maintaining or improving their job situations.

2. **Consumer choice and use of "alternative" activities and resources** - Of the nine Project Consumers who developed "safety net" plans:

   > Six demonstrated the ability to select and pursue planned "career development" strategies involving educational, training, tutoring, and/or volunteer work opportunities making use of "generic" and, in some cases, "vocational rehabilitation" services.

   > Four demonstrated the ability to select from among and then pursue planned "employment security" strategies, including three who increased their savings and one who secured a Section 8 housing certificate. Accounting for the relative lack of activity in this area was the fact that, whereas most "employment security" strategies related to what one will do in the event of job loss, only one person became unemployed after developing his "safety net" plan, and he secured another job on his own within a period of weeks.

   Finally, all nine Project Consumers who developed "safety net" plans either maintained (five) or enhanced (four) their employment status over the course of the Project year. Of the three who did not make such plans, two experienced a decline in employment status (both are now unemployed) and one maintained his job, while picking up additional hours from one of the Consumers who lost his.

   From these short-term results, one cannot determine the extent to which planning and enacting personal "career development" and "employment security" strategies with consumers of supported employment services will reduce the incidence or periods of unemployment or alleviate the negative consequences of job loss when such occurs. However, the experiences of these Consumers do provide some basis for making the claim that, for most consumers of supported employment (SE) services:

   > There is a positive and abiding link between planning and preparing for one's employment future and maintaining or enhancing one's job situation; and

   > The future they desire includes a better job than the one they have now and that they can work toward securing this future by making use of resources outside of the "rehabilitation system".

IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

E. Resource, Staff, Organizational, and Systems Development

1. **"Generic" and "rehabilitation" resources** - Based upon "safety nets" planning results, the ESS identified, explored, and developed community "generic" and "rehabilitation" resources available to address "career development" and "employment security" needs, one result of which was an annotated "Safety Net Project Resource List" of:

   - Volunteer work sites and sources
   - Networking sources
   - Unpaid work experience sites
   - Unemployment resources
   - Educational opportunities
   - Service and support agencies

   Nine of the 12 Project Consumers made use of one or more of the resources from these listings. In addition, the Project ESS:

   > With cooperation from the Virginia Employment Commission, developed "Guidelines for Completing Unemployment Paperwork", which Alexandria CSB staff found helpful in assisting Consumers when they applied for unemployment benefits and services; and

   > Was instrumental in assisting AMHS staff in re-establishing working relations with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services.

2. **Alexandria Mental Retardation Services** (AMRS) - AMRS Vocational Services staff developed six individual "safety net" plans with Project Consumers and assisted three of them in making use of "alternative activities and resources" in implementing them. Further, during the Project year, four of the six Consumers improved their employment status, while the others maintained their current employment situations. Moreover, whereas eight AMRS supported employment Consumers were unemployed and "doing nothing" at the onset of the Project, by the end of the Project year this was true of only one person.

   A member of the AMRS Vocational Services management team reported that staff, as a result of their participation in the Project, were "more excited about their jobs" and:

   > "Know more about...and have a better understanding of what people want to do";

   > "Have more open and honest relationships with the people served and their families"; and

   > "Have a better understanding of issues which may cause unemployment, information to overcome the fear of unemployment, and a fairly good knowledge of resources to use during periods of unemployment".

   Another staff member observed that the Project has "...helped clarify service provider roles in meeting client needs when their situation changes....formalized things we had considered in the past, but not always done....gotten more people involved....given more protection to the client....[and] made clients more responsible for themselves."

IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

AMRS Vocational Services staff encountered difficulties in:

> Engaging AMRS case management personnel in the "safety net" planning and implementation process, in part resultant from their operational attachment to AMRS Residential Services and extended responsibilities relative to "Medicaiding" the AMRS service delivery system.

> Orienting family members to the "safety net" concept and getting them involved in the planning and implementation process.

> Taking "more of a whole life" approach to the planning process, that is, "looking not just at the job", but "expanding out to other areas and getting more people involved" beyond just AMRS staff and members of Consumer families.

Strategies to overcome these barriers have been incorporated within AMRS Vocational Services plans for developing "safety net" provisions within the individual service plan (ISP) of each of its 58 Consumers of supported employment services over the coming year.

Thus, as a result of participation in the "Safety Nets" Project, AMRS Vocational Services supported employment staff clearly demonstrated "increased knowledge and capabilities" with respect to both:

> "Identifying consumer career development and employment security needs"; and

> "Developing and using alternative activities and resources to anticipate and address these needs".

Further, they are in the process of "effecting changes in their supported employment system" which may yet "demonstrate a replicable model for more efficiently and effectively addressing the career development and employment security needs" of the people they serve.

3. **Alexandria Mental Health Services** - AMHS staff assisted three Clubhouse Members in developing "safety net" plans, all three of whom made use of "generic" resources in implementing "career development" amd "employment security" strategies. While doing so, two of these people maintained their current jobs, while one dramatically enhanced his employment status. However, "safety net" plans were not developed with three other persons targeted by the Project, for a combination of personal and programmatic reasons. With respect to the latter, AMHS staff cited barriers with respect to:

> Spending the past two years satisfying an operational priority for implementation of Medicaid regulations;

> A Vocational Services staff of just one person and the readily available "fallback of the Clubhouse" in the event of job loss; and

> A relative lack of emphasis upon employment outcomes due to a "keeping people out of the hospital" performance indicator and derivative case management hesitation "to refer people for vocational services."

Still, AMHS staff generally credit the "Safety Nets" Project with having "increased the employment consciousness of staff", "helped to focus and coordinate services," "identified resources available outside in the community", and "given us another facet to look at and consider as we begin a vocational plan." As a result, the AMRS Work Force Program intends to further facilitate Clubhouse movement toward "an employment orientation" over the coming year by continuing to "pilot" the "safety net" planning process so as to better "define roles, relationships, and responsibilities" in the employment process.

Thus, the "Safety Nets" Project appears to have increased the knowledge and capabilities of some AMHS staff with respect to identifying "career development" and "employment security" needs and then addressing them with "alternative activities and resources", while heightening the awareness of a number of other staff. Certainly, the "safety nets" planning and resource development process has not evolved in the AMHS Clubhouse to the point where it can be said to have demonstrated a replicable change in the service delivery system, but the potential and desire for such change seem to exist.

Still, there are a number of attitudinal barriers to be overcome among both staff and Members, and further clarity and agreement is needed as to the nature and degree of support to be provided by various service personnel. Moreover, Member demand for employment services is sufficiently great as to possibly mitigate against development of a "true" supported employment capacity for service to persons with "severe disabilities".

4. **ICON Employment Services** - Following the end of the "Safety Nets" Project, its Employment Security Specialist assumed a newly-created position within ICON, designed to facilitate efficient and effective coordination and funding of supported employment services. Part of her job has involved orienting ICON personnel to design and use of the "safety net" planning and resource development systems she refined during the Project year. In effect, the system developed with Alexandria Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services is being adopted by ICON for its own supported employment service operations, including a three-year demonstration project involving survivors of brain injury.

5. **Northern Virginia supported employment service delivery system** - The Arlington Bureau of Mental Retardation has tentatively contracted with ICON to provide 14 hours of "planning" service to assist in developing "safety net" plans with five of its supported employment consumers. Representatives from other agencies serving on the Safety Nets Committee have made tentative commitments to "pilot" development of "safety net" plans with five consumers each. Finally, Committee members have expressed a desire to continue their work as a group.

Still, the impact of the "Safety Nets" Project upon design and delivery of supported employment services in Northern Virginia has primarily been one of heightened awareness among representatives of the private and public providers represented on the Safety Nets Committee. The Committee members are basically mid-level management personnel with limited ability to influence CSB policy and funding, and efforts to

involve a DRS representative on the Committee were unsuccessful. Without some mechanism for funding "pilot" ventures in other jurisdictions, it would seem that extension of the "safety nets" orientation throughout the region will be a lengthy process reliant upon the ideological commitment and creative resource development of a select number of supported employment provider representatives.

F. Importance of Project[7]

According to the Rehabilitation Research and Training Institute, Virginia Commonwealth University, the number of Virginians in supported employment (SE) increased from 184 to 2,338 from October 1985 through March 1990. While the 24-month "retention rate" rose steadily for the 1,619 persons entering SE over the last two years of this period (from 46% to 62%), by the end of the period 19% had moved to at least one new job and 22% were awaiting such a move from "job referral pools". Simply put, unemployment has become "a fact of life" for many consumers of SE services, undoubtedly even more so during the last lingering recession. Yet, in two separate surveys of currently employed consumers of SE services in Northern Virginia conducted in 1990 and 1992, roughly half of the respondents indicated that no on had ever discussed unemployment with them.

The loss of a job is not unique to consumers of SE services and can thus be viewed as "an experience of real life and part of the normal work experience". SE is, by Federal definition, "competitive work in an integrated work setting for individuals who, because of their handicaps, need on-going support to perform that work." Obviously, therefore, some will need support during periods of unemployment. But in Virginia's SE system, as in other such systems around the country, there is:

> "A general lack of preparedness to deal with unemployment effectively and appropriately"; and

> "No pervasive systematic provision for supporting activities alternate to employment" while seeking a "return to work".

A summary of results from a pre-Project survey of Northern Virginia SE service providers indicated that "current practices appear to rely primarily on two responses to unemployment: refer the person to any supervised activity; or, do nothing." Identified barriers to developing and enacting a more "proactive" and "systemic" approach to the "provision of adequate safety net services" during periods of unemployment included:

> "The perception that unemployment is not a valid experience for persons with developmental or psychiatric disorders."

> "Lack of consensus around what kinds or even if alternative activities are legitimate."

> "Lack of planning by service providers, families, and consumers....for alternative activities should unemployment occur."

[7]Quotations from "Safety Nets Paper" developed by the Safety Nets Committee of the Northern Virginia Supported Employment Steering Committee.

IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

> "Lack of financial resources...funding flexibility...[and] interagency coordination and linkages....for provision of safety net services and long-term job supports."

> "Lack of direct-service staff experience, skills, and resources in arranging for and supporting people in alternative activities."

As an alternative to this bleak situation, the Northern Virginia Supported Employment Safety Nets Project has demonstrated that with a personalized planning focus on career development and employment security issues, consumers, staff, and involved family members will not only become more aware of the issues, but determine goals and strategies for addressing them. Further, the Project has shown that both generic resources and natural supports can be developed and used to a considerable degree in working toward achievement of these goals and, moreover, that with a clear "career" focus, more effective use can be made of "vocational rehabilitation" resources. Finally, the Project has provided evidence, albeit limited (due to its short time frame), that use of an anticipatory "safety nets" approach, inclusive of strategies for pursuing a career path and dealing with job loss, can help to alleviate unemployment concerns.

Still, a number of issues remain in this regard, most notable among which are:

> A supported employment funding and service delivery system which generally does not promote either career exploration and change or job development and advancement. Indicative of this is the fact that nearly 80% of the activities engaged in by the Project's Employment Security Specialist did not fall within the realm of "billable hours" for the delivery of supported employment services in Virginia.

> The segregation of financing, planning, and delivery of supported employment services from the financing, planning, and delivery of other types of services, in particular those having to do with housing and related supports. Project consumers, like most of us, could not so easily divorce their aspirations with respect to employment from their hopes and dreams for a home, companionship, and greater participation in the life of the community.

However, even working within these limitations and shortcomings of the existent service delivery system for persons with severe disabilities, the Northern Virginia Supported Employment Safety Nets Project has clearly demonstrated that provision of assistance to consumers in looking at, thinking about, and determining their career paths and what to do in the event of unemployment, will in most cases:

> Alter supported employment goals and the nature and use of strategies and resources for achieving these goals; and

> Have a positive and beneficial impact not only on supported employment outcomes, but on the quality of life led by individuals outside of the world of work.

ICON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
"SAFETY NETS" DEMONSTRATION PROJECT: FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION TO AND FORMAT FOR INDIVIDUAL "SAFETY NET" (CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY) PLAN, WITH SAMPLE

2. "SAFETY NETS" PROJECT RESOURCE LIST

3. "SAFETY NETS" GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING UNEMPLOYMENT PAPERWORK

4. REPORT OF THE SAFETY NETS COMMITTEE OF THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT STEERING COMMITTEE (REVISION OF APRIL 1992)

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1:

INTRODUCTION TO AND FORMAT FOR INDIVIDUAL "SAFETY NET" (CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY) PLAN, WITH SAMPLE

ICON Employment Services

110 N. Royal Street, Suite 508
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703-548-4048

What is the Safety Net Plan?

The Safety Net Plan is a list of goals and objectives that the consumer would like to focus on in times of unemployment. It is also a tool for career enhancement and advancement while employed. The pro-active plan outlines the strengths and needs of the consumer from the points of view of employment security and career development. It contains the time frame for those objectives to be initiated, the individuals that agree to assist in the completion of those objectives, and the full vocational picture of the consumers future.

How can the Safety Net Plan help a consumer?

When unemployment strikes, often the consumer and all those involved in his/her life scramble to figure out what to do next. Often the consumer is faced with loneliness, frustration and boredom, and may be left with the alternative of participating in 'work activities'. Often there is emotional adjustment to schedule changes, and a crisis can occur. With an outlined plan of direction, and the responsibilities already delegated, a phone call can swiftly draw everyone into action and eliminate crisis intervention. At the same time, the consumer is already aware of the activities etc. that he /she helped to develop. There are no surprises and the period of unemployment becomes a chance to prepare for a better job.

Where did the Safety Net Plan come from?

In 1990 a group of vocational service providers formed the Safety Net Committee to study the problems and issues that surround unemployment. From this group came the grant issued through NIDRR that allowed ICON to study and investigate the generic services available to anyone who is unemployed. With the participation of 12 consumers from the City of Alexandria, Safety Net Planning Services were offered, plans were developed, and implemented. Through this study it was determined that this advance planning was a welcomed necessity for consumers, families and providers.

"SAFETY NET"
Individualized Career Development and Employment Security Plan

What is it?

1. *A Planning Process developed for those periods of time during which unemployment exists.*

   a. *waiting for job development completion*

   b. *between job because of termination or resignation from previous job*

2. *Identification of Activities and Resources that will maintain or enhance current levels of skills (social, vocational, academic, communication, psychosocial)*

3. *Responsibilities for initiation and follow-up are assigned to team members (consumer, parents/care providers, providing agencies) to prevent crisis in areas of food, housing, SSA, medical, money, etc.. Focuses goals and objectives on daily living skills, organization and memory skills, work ethics, issues that may have caused the termination or resignation, etc.*

"INSURANCE POLICY"

SE FOR PERSONS WITH PSYCHIATRIC AND OTHER CHALLENGING NEEDS

1. *Need for a holistic (total) approach*

    a. *Cohesion among the providing agencies*

    b. *Proper planning procedure for "when" it happens*

2. *Therapeutic support is a must for proactive intervention*

    a. *immediate access to therapeutic support*

    b. *team and staff made aware of "signals" that indicate onset of episodic behavior*

    c. *service system prepared to allow the person to take time off to avoid hospitalization or reduce intensity of episodic behavior*

3. *Emotional support and assurance that the job will be there when the episode has decreased to the point that they can return to work.*

4. *Training of "natural supports" at the worksite. Teaching supervisors and co-workers aware of the "signals"*

What is a 'Net'work?

Mr. Webster has the following definitions that apply:

NET: An open-meshed fabric twisted, knotted, or woven together at regular intervals.
or... an entrapping device or situation.
or... a group of communications stations operating under unified control.
or... to receive by way of profit.
or... to produce by way of profit.
or... to get possession of.

NETWORK: an interconnected or interrelated chain, group or system.

NETWORKING: the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups or institutions.

Building a 'Net'work...What has been tried so far?

Examples: Employment Security

* While employed, open a savings account. Put away money for use during times of unemployment. If goals include home-ownership, the purchase of a car, obtaining a maid to assist in reducing the stress of cleaning, taking classes, going on vacation, etc. a financial planner (or budget assistant) might be beneficial.

* Mentors... someone at work (or in another company, or with experience in the field...) who has a similar job, that can be used as a sounding board or contact person that would be available to field questions revolving around job or work stress.

* Assuring a stable home environment. If 'Section 8' housing, be aware of rent reduction. If agency run housing, are staff compatible, are there any barriers? Does the family need assistance (respite, counselling, education, financial planning, legal services, nursing care, evaluations, support of any kind) to reduce stress? Etc.

* Medical coverage if needed. Where is there a clinic that would offer assistance? What is the Medicaid potential?

* If the Consumer becomes unemployed... What services will assist in staying 'marketable'?
Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance (if applicable), Job Services, Utility Assistance, General Relief Funds, Church Charities (for food, clothing, counselling, etc.), Emergency Shelter Assistance, thrift stores, situational assessments, volunteer opportunities, other personal goals as noted.

EXAMPLES: Career Development

* Work in a volunteer position several hours or several days a week as tolerated. Build stamina, or maintain current level of functioning. This shows potential employers the consumers desire to work, and to learn. It also builds the Consumers knowledge base, adds work experience to a resume, allows the Consumer to try different jobs, or build on skills that may have been lost. It is also a connection to the community to build on networking possibilities and friendships. It allows socialization skills to be maintained and improved.

* Sign up for adult education classes, recreation programs, college classes, GED prep class, community seminars, library lectures or programs, community education functions, etc.

* Go to work with a friend... observe and ask questions.

* Use what you know. There are opportunities for anyone with knowledge in an area to offer to others; i.e. tutoring, counselling, advising others, social contacts, coaching, etc.

Safety Net Planning

I. Questions and Observations at Intake

A. Who are the key persons at time of intake.

1. Who is missing, and what role do they play?
2. Inquire about other significant persons.
   a. Begin to form your 'net'work

B. Who wants what? vs. What does the consumer want?

C. What pieces of this persons life have you obtained/what is missing?

D. What does the "attitude check" on each person tell you?

1. Do you see obvious or potentially hidden barriers?
   a. Who potentially could be responsible? What are the effects?
   b. Can change occur? (Gut feelings...)

II. Investigation

A. Answer (or begin to answer), questions not answered.

1. What information could not be obtained at the intake?
   a. Question the Consumer.
   b. Question or interview everyone close to the Consumer.
2. What suggestions were raised for your follow up?
   (i.e.)
   a. What educational opportunities.'s are available...
   b. What adaptive equipment/accommodations could be obtained..
   c. Etc.

B. Pre-plan, or get your ducks in a row.

1. Know potential resources, or have suggestions for areas.
   (but don't "know" too much...)
2. Know everyone role and how to present responsibility.
3. Be prepared to facilitate and direct questions and answers.
4. Be prepared to draw answers from people...

III. Planning Meeting

A. TAKE CHARGE !

B. Clarify everyones role.

C. Focus on the Consumer.

D. Complete the ICDESP. **

E. Wrap-up, review and clarify roles.

IV. Process

A. Procedures

B. Investigation

C. Follow along

V. Continuous 'Net'working

** See the ICDESP Outline

Individual Career Development and Employment Security Plan

I. Career Development Information

- A. Current Employment
- B. Unemployment Services Accessed (Past and Present)
- C. Career Goal as Expressed by the Participant
- D. Career Goal as Expressed by Others
- E. Career Development Strengths
  - 1. Consumer View
  - 2. View of Others
- F. Career Development Needs
  - 1. Consumer View
  - 2. View of Others
- G. Objectives for the Enhancement of Job Skills or Career Development
  - 1. Objective(s)
    - a. Individual Initiating Service
    - b. Time Frame for Service Initiation
    - c. Follow up to be Completed by...
    - d. Strategies

II. Employment Security Information

- A. Checklist of Systemic Needs at the Time of Unemployment
- B. Employment Security Strengths
  - 1. Consumer View
  - 2. View of Others
- C. Employment Security Needs
  - 1. Consumer View
  - 2. View of Others
- D. Objectives for the Enhancement of Employment Security
  - 1. Objective(s)
    - a. Individual Initiating Service
    - b. Time Frame for Service Initiation
    - c. Follow up to be Completed by...
    - d. Strategies

III. Signature Page

- A. Other Potential Services Identified
- B. Signatures and Titles

Individual Career Development and Employment Security Plan Summary
Safety Net Services

Name:_____ Date:_____

Current Activity: Employed _____ or Unemployed _____

Career Goal:_____

Objectives: Career Development

1._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

2._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

3._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

4._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

5._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

Objectives: Employment Security

1._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

2._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

3._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

4._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

5._____

Provider:_____ **Start Date:**_____ **End Date:**_____

ICDESP Outline

Individual Career Development and Employment Security Plan

Name:_____ **Date:**_____

Program:_____

Case Manager:_____

Other Individuals Involved in the Development and Implementation of This Plan:

* Include all individuals that may be involved, with the Consumers consent.

_____

_____

Career Development Information

Current Employment:_____

* Try to obtain all critical information, if individual is employed. If they are unemployed, note this, and describe current daily activity.

_____ *OR*

Unemployment Services Accessed (Past and Present):_____

* Note all services the consumer has used or tried to use. If barriers were noted, address them with the group, and look for solutions.

_____

_____

Career Goal as Expressed by the Participant:_____

_____

_____

_____

Career Goal as Expressed by Others:_____

_____

* Compare the goals: do they agree? What is the realistic picture, and what needs to happen to get agreement?

_____

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Career Development Strength(s)	Career Development Need(s)
Consumer View: * Ask questions to bring out information that the Consumer can provide. Often it is information that can be used at a job or work interview. It is also a self-esteem booster, and self-awareness exercise. Questions may include: - How do you feel around people? - What types of things do you like to do? - What would you like to do? - What would you like to do better? - Are there things you would like to explore?	
Views of Others (Specify): * When introducing other persons view, be sure to ease them in with positive language. Rephrase the responses if necessary. Ask the questions in a non-threatening manner. Stress the 'strengths' and build on them for the 'needs' goals. Try to focus on how the 'needs' can help the group focus on career development.	

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Objectives for the Enhancement of Job Skills or Career Development:

1 * Use this area to write the formal goals, as determined by the strengths and needs list, and group decision. Be clear about who will initiate the service, and when the service is desired to begin. Also state who will be following up on the service after it is delivered.

Individual Initiating Service:_____

Time Frame for Service Initiation:_____

Follow up to be Completed by:_____

Strategies:_____* Include any information that may outline how the service needs to be delivered, or how to approach linking the individual, or any accommodation that is necessary.

2 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service:_____

Time Frame for Service Initiation:_____

Follow up to be Completed by:_____

Strategies:_____

_____

_____

3 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service:_____

Time Frame for Service Initiation:_____

Follow up to be Completed by:_____

Strategies:_____

_____

_____

Objectives for the Enhancement of Job Skills or Career Development (Continued)

4 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service: _____

Time Frame for Service Initiation: _____

Follow up to be Completed by: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

_____

5 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service: _____

Time Frame for Service Initiation: _____

Follow up to be Completed by: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

_____

Employment Security Information

Systemic Needs at the Time of Unemployment:

	Yes	No	N/A	
Eligible for Unemployment Insurance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
Eligible for SSI / SSDI	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
In Need of Medical Benefits	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	* Include all the
Eligible for Medicaid	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	Needs that apply.
Eligible for Medicare	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
In Need of Monetary Assistance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
Eligible for General Relief	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
In Need of Housing - Shelter	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
In Need of Rent Reduction	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	
In Need of Extra Food &/or Food Stamps	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	

Employment Security Strengths	Employment Security Needs
Consumer View:	
* Open discussion on all the 'things' that could help the Consumer obtain or maintain a job or work situation. Questions to ask include: - What kind of assistance would help you at a work site? - What has been difficult for you on other jobs, or with other work? - Do you have any trouble getting up in the morning? Do you need help? - What services may ease your work stress? i.e. Counselling? Support groups? - Does your company offer an Employee Assistance Program? - Are there any medical concerns that need to be addressed?	
View(s) of Others (Specify):	

Objectives for the Enhancement of Employment Security

1 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service: _____

Time Frame for Service Initiation: _____

Follow up to be Completed by: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service: _____

Time Frame for Service Initiation: _____

Follow up to be Completed by: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Objectives for the Enhancement of Employment Security (Continued)

3 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service: _____

Time Frame for Service Initiation: _____

Follow up to be Completed by: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 _____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service: _____

Time Frame for Service Initiation: _____

Follow up to be Completed by: _____

Strategies: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other Potential Services Identified: To be Investigated By:
* include services that may be out of the scope of career development, but of importance to the consumer, and noted.

At the time of unemployment, who will be responsible for initiating the Safety Net plan?
* State the name of the person (often the consumer), or agency responsible for making the first phone call.

The undersigned agree to follow the outlined plan in the event of the unemployment of this individual, and will take on the responsibilities as assigned.

Name:	Title:

* Have everyone present sign the form. Also be sure they write in their title. This is helpful when you or the Consumer want to get things done. If the plan is not put into action for almost a year, it is possible the person who signed has left that organization. You can then use the title as a means of getting the new person to commit to those same tasks.

Revised 10/26/92 JLO

Individual Career Development and Employment Security Plan

Name: Xxxxx Xxxxxx Date: March 23, 1992

Program: Alexandria Vocational Services; MR

Case Manager: _____

Other Individuals Involved in the Development and Implementation of This Plan: Patricia, Placement Specialist; Susan, Acting Case Manager; Vicki, STEP Supervisor, Vocational Services; Jennifer, ICON Employment Security Specialist.

Career Development Information

Current Employment: Xxxxx is currently employed at 'On Wisconsin', a restaurant in the The Savoy Hotel, Georgetown. He is a food service worker working Tuesday through Friday, 7:00 am-3:30 pm, earning $5.00/ hour.

AND/OR

Unemployment Services Accessed (Past and Present): Xxxxx has utilized the VEC for Job Services, and Unemployment benefits. He has used food stamps, utility assistance, rent reduction, obtained food from charities, and sought out other needs from Case Management, and Vocational Services.

Career Goal as Expressed by the Participant: Xxxxx would like to work in a job in the federal government. He suggested Fort Belvoir working in a kitchen, or in janitorial, possibly at the bowling alley. Preferably on one bus route. He also suggested sweeping in Old Town.

Career Goal as Expressed by Others: Everyone was in agreement with Xxxxs' goal of working full time for the government. Vocational staff were not in agreement with the goal of sweeping due to medical issues. Job development will be ongoing for a job of this nature.

Career Development Strength(s)	Career Development Need(s)
Consumer View: * Wants to learn to read. * Wants to work.	* Independence Skills in: Cooking Reading Leisure Activities
Views of: Vicki, Patricia: * Desire to read. * Desire to go to work. * Good attendance record.	* Overcoming problems with female supervisors. * Handling frustrations on the job.

Objectives for the Enhancement of Job Skills or Career Development:

1 Xxxxx will learn to read through a tutor, at his own pace. (Xxxxx would prefer a white woman as a first choice for his tutor).

Individual Initiating Service: Jennifer
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Immediately.
Follow up to be Completed by: Vocational Services Staff.
Strategies: Jennifer will link a tutor from the Literacy Council with Xxxxx and will ensure his acceptance of that individual. Xxxxx will work 1:1 with the tutor on the reading program.

2 Xxxxx will improve his ability to cook at home through instruction in classes or clubs. He will also gain confidence in his reading ability by reading directions on boxes, or food containers.

Individual Initiating Service: Jennifer
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Ongoing
Follow up to be Completed by: Vocational Services Staff.
Strategies: Classes or clubs will be sought out, and Xxxxx will be informed or all resources. The exposure to these skills will improve Xxxxs' chance of obtaining a food prep job, and increase his range of salary.

3 Xxxxx will attend other Adult Education classes to increase his presence in the community, and network with non-disabled persons. Xxxxx will attend sporting activities (Special Olympics), or participate in other activities

Individual Initiating Service: Jennifer
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Ongoing
Follow up to be Completed by: Vocational Services Staff
Strategies: Xxxxx will decrease his tension that often builds at work, or with friends by participating in leisure activities such as bowling, square dancing, etc.

Objectives for the Enhancement of Job Skills or Career Development (Continued)

4 Xxxxx will attend sporting activities (Special Olympics), or participate in other activities to gain more exposure to his community, while the adult education classes are explored.

Individual Initiating Service: Patricia (Special Olympics), Jennifer
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Within two weeks
Follow up to be Completed by: Patricia, Jennifer, Vicki

Strategies: To reduce stress, continue to build self-esteem, and give Xxxxs more social skills to carry into the work place.

5 No other objectives at this time._____

_____

_____

_____

Individual Initiating Service:_____

Time Frame for Service Initiation:_____

Follow up to be Completed by:_____

Strategies:_____

_____

_____

Employment Security Information

Systemic Needs if Unemployed:

	Yes	No	N/A
Eligible for Unemployment Insurance	[X]	[ ]	[ ]
Eligible for SSI / SSDI	[ ]	[X]	[ ]
In Need of Medical Benefits	[X]	[ ]	[ ]
Eligible for Medicaid	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
Eligible for Medicare	[ ]	[ ]	[X]
In Need of Monetary Assistance	[X]	[ ]	[ ]
Eligible for General Relief	[X]	[ ]	[ ]
In Need of Housing - Shelter	[ ]	[X]	[ ]
In Need of Rent Reduction	[ ]	[X]	[ ]
In Need of Extra Food &/or Food Stamps	[X]	[ ]	[ ]

Employment Security Strengths	Employment Security Needs
Consumer View: * Good worker. * Gets along with people. * On time to work.	* Medical Insurance * Rent Reduction
View of: Patricia, Vicki : * Work is motivating and important to Xxxxx. * Prompt, on time to work. * Excellent communication. * Extremely resourceful. * Easily travel trained.	* Xxxxx likes to job hop. * He likes to move residences. * Medical issues (takes days off frequently).

Objectives for the Enhancement of Employment Security

1 Xxxxx will learn to obtain and turn in Metro tickets within one month.

Individual Initiating Service: Patricia, Vocational Services Staff.
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Immediately
Follow up to be Completed by: Patricia, and Vocational Staff -- Ongoing.

Strategies: Patricia will assist Xxxxx in ordering address labels to adhere to his tickets. This will reduce his stress in filing in his name and address, over and over. Prior to fading from Xxxxx, Patricia will be sure he has the procedure mastered.

2 Xxxxx will be responsible for paying his medical bills (out of his pocket), until his insurance coverage begins in July. If Xxxxx becomes unemployed, and has no medical insurance, he will go to the Casey Clinic for medical attention if necessary.
Individual Initiating Service: Patricia will show Xxxxx the Clinic.
Time Frame for Service Initiation: within one week.
Follow up to be Completed by: Vocational Staff, and Xxxxx.

Strategies: Patricia will assist Xxxxx in monitoring his bills, and Xxxxx will initiate his medical needs, as necessary.

Objectives for the Enhancement of Employment Security (Continued)

3 If Xxxxx is unemployed, he will ask for assistance in obtaining Food Stamps, getting Rent Reduction, and Utility Assistance (if necessary).

Individual Initiating Service: Xxxxx Xxxxxx
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Within one week of unemployment, ongoing
Follow up to be Completed by: Case Manager, Vocational Services Staff.

Strategies: Xxxxx will be given a reminder to obtain the necessary forms, and will ask for assistance in completing them. Xxxxx will turn in the forms, and take care of any updating that is necessary.

4 If applicable, Xxxxx will apply for Unemployment Insurance, and register for Job Services assistance with the help of a Vocational Services staff member. Xxxxx will complete the follow up work as necessary.

Individual Initiating Service: Xxxxx and Vocational Services staff.
Time Frame for Service Initiation: Within one week of termination.
Follow up to be Completed by: Xxxxx and Vocational Services staff.

Strategies: Xxxxx will receive assistance in completing the forms, doing an intake at Job Services, completing requirements for Unemployment Insurance, and applying, and interviewing for job positions.
Vocational Services will do ongoing job development.

Other Potential Services Identified:	To be Investigated By:

At the time of unemployment, who will be responsible for initiating the Safety Net plan?

Xxxxx Xxxxxx and Vocational Staff.

The undersigned agree to follow the outlined plan in the event of the unemployment of this individual, and will take on the responsibilities as assigned.

Name:	Title:

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ATTACHMENT 2:

"SAFETY NETS" PROJECT RESOURCE LIST

Safety Net Project Resource List

Compiled October 1991 - September 1992

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"*" Denotes support of, or participation in the Safety Net Grant Project

Volunteer Sites and Sources

Alex. Volunteer Bureau
801 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA

836-2176
Mary LaMoy

A referral source for any type of volunteer activity in and near Alexandria.

Fairfax Voluntary Action Center
10530 Page Ave.
Fairfax, VA 22030

246-3460
Beth DeChristafaro

A referral source for any type of volunteer activity in Northern Virginia.

American Red Cross
National Capitol
2025 E St., NW
Washington, DC 20006

202-728-6481
Harriet Reed
Adult Volunteer Coordinator
Fairfax

Accepts volunteers for office work and thrift shop duties.
(For information on the Thrift Shop call: 321-8890)

American Red Cross
615 N. St. Asaph St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

838-8899
Violet Bierce
Volunteer Site
Reference

A source for generic references for individuals with disabilities involved in volunteer work for non-profit organizations. (Based on knowledge from ICON staff and consumers.)

National Wildlife Federation
8925 Leesburg Pike
Vienna, Virginia 22184

790-4000 (-4439)
Roy Geiger
Volunteer Coordinator

Utilizes a volunteer force of people to conduct trail walks, and give ecology talks. Training is provided and contact with the public is a necessity.

National Volunteer Center
Arlington, Virginia

276-0542

A referral source for any type of volunteer activity.

YMCA - Alex. Branch
Monroe St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22301

549-0850
Anne Marie Scherbarth
Program Director

A source for community volunteer activity.

YMCA - Fairfax Branch
9124 Little River Turnpike
Fairfax, Virginia 22031

323-1222
Karen Remeikis
Program Director

A source for voluntary office work and outdoor maintenance. Some activities are seasonal.

* **Fairfax County**
Therapeutic Recreation Dept.
12011 Government Center Pkwy
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

324-5532
Pat Franckewitz
Supervisor

Volunteer opportunities exist in the office; collating, data entry, copying, etc.

* **Fairfax Co. Park Authority** 246-5563
3701 Pender Drive Cindy Walsh
Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Special Populations Coordinator

A source for volunteer opportunity within the parks and recreation centers.

Volunteer Services 838-6400 (Ext. 167)
Dept. of MH/MR/SA Judy Carriker
720 N. St. Asaph St. Coordinator
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Provides volunteers to city agencies by referral.

* **Mental Health Association.** 548-0010
3112 Mt. Vernon Ave. Shirley Indelicato
Alexandria, Virginia 22305 Executive Director

Will accept volunteers if a job coach is present at the beginning, and consistent follow up is provided to assess and support the individual. Also it is available as a training area for employment specialists.

* **Alexandria City Libraries**

Burke Library **370-6050**
4701 Seminary Rd.
Alexandria, Virginia

Volunteer positions for individuals who display an interest in library work.

City Library **838-4555**
717 Queen St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Volunteer positions for individuals who display an interest in library work.

ALICE-Alex. Library Info. Center Exchange **838-4557 (-4555)**

A city wide information resource system that claims to be user-friendly for individuals with disabilities and/or non-readers.

Fort Ward Park **838-4340**
Braddock Rd. Jim Saunders
Alexandria, Virginia

Always in need of volunteer support. The jobs are basically custodial, (trash collection, grounds maintenance), but have been worked by individuals with disabilities in the past.

* **Virginia Employment Commission** 823-4135
823-4100 (FAX)

Job Services
386 S. Pickett Street
Alexandria, Virginia 220304

Billy Pritchett
Manager

Volunteer positions are available occasionally in the office. Individuals with disabilities are welcome; contact Linda Crafton.

Service Agencies

National Right to Work
Port Royal Road
Annandale, Virginia

321-9820
Barbara Yasick
Union relations

They offer legal assistance to those individuals involved in Union dispute regardless. I contacted them as a resource for any one who is pressured to join, or not join a union, should they enter a job where Unions are active.

* **Mental Health Association.**
3112 Mt. Vernon Ave.
Alexandria, Virginia

548-0010
Shirley Indelicato
Acting Director

The association offers a Hotline for service inquiry; parent support groups (Parents Anonymous); programs for school age children; mental health advocacy.

YMCA - Alexandria Branch
Monroe St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22301

549-0850
Anne Marie Scherbarth
Program Director

Offers year-round recreation/fitness programs.

* **Fairfax County**
Therapeutic Recreation Dept.
12011 Government Center Pkwy
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

324-5532
Pat Franckewitz
Supervisor

Offers instructional programs and weekend field trips to individuals with disabilities. Also provides companions to persons wishing to mainstream into classes.

* **Fairfax Co. Park Authority**
3701 Pender Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

246-5563
Cindy Walsh
Special Populations Coordinator

Offers mainstream and adapted fitness/recreation activity.

* **Alexandria City**
Therapeutic Recreation

998-5229
Lisa Silverman
Director, MH/MR Programs

Recreation programs for both MH and MR individuals in the City.

Agency on Aging
Alexandria, Virginia

838-0920
Moya Atkinson
Executive Director

and
Retired Senior
Volunteer Program
1108 Jefferson St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

838-4840
Ellen Deremer
Director

The group provides volunteers on a referral basis, and most of the referrals come from the office on aging, and pertain to 'Senior' activities.

Mental Health Association
of Northern Virginia

642-0800
Free Referral Info.

Department for Rights
of Virginians with Disabilities
100 N. Washington St.
Suite 231
Falls Church, Virginia 22046

536-7802
1-800-552-3962
Elaine Viccora
Client Rights Advocate

Provides legal services to individuals with disabilities that have faced discrimination.

* **Department of Rehab. Services**
205 S. Whiting St., Suite 307
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

823-7320
Wanda Fells (MH Cases)
Beth Stanhagen (MR Cases)
Field Counselors

Provides vocational evaluation, assessment and referral services.

* **Department of Rehab. Services**
5904 Old Richmond Highway, #410
Alexandria, Virginia 22303

960-3411
Karen Brown
Field Counselor

New Opportunities
Mt. Vernon Community. MH 360-6910
Holland Road Marianne Hallett
Alexandria, VA Coordinator/Counselor

Provides a support group and career counselling to individuals with mental illness.

* **Comprehensive Employment Services** 960-3411
5904 Old Richmond Hwy. Terri Chenevey
Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22303

* **Department of Rehab. Services** 359-1287
Comprehensive Employment Services Lisa Morrison
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Association of Retarded Citizens (202) 561-7490
District of Columbia Steve Carwile
2700 M.L.K. Ave., SE Vocational Manager
Washington, D.C. 20032

Provides services to individuals with disabilities.

* **Prince William County** 361-5020 (-5539)
Vocational Services Sharon Bender, Director
9208 Centreville Road Laurie Weiss, Voc. Counselor
Manassas, Virginia 22110

Provides supported employment program with mentally ill individuals.

YWCA - Dunn Loring 560-1111
P.O. Box 86 Lydia Tutwiler
Dunn Loring, Virginia 22027

Provides a weekend recreational and educational program for teens (13-18), and young adults (19-30 +/-) in the Northern Virginia area. The program is geared toward individuals with learning disabilities and very mild retardation. The staff ratio is usually 1:7, with the average attendance of 12. The fee is $25 for YWCA membership, plus a program fee of $100 per year. Some activities require additional entrance or activity fees.

Dreamway Farm
Rt. 2, Box 544
Purcelville, Virginia 22132

(703) 338-5151
Judy Hoff
Carol McCord
Instructor

The organization offers therapeutic riding lessons to individuals with any disability. They also offer a 'day on the farm' experience for inner-city kids, and youth at risk. They offer group and individual lessons, as well as family packages. They enlist the help of volunteers for all aspects of the farm and business.

Whitman - Walker Clinic Inc.
NOVAA Project
3426 Washington Blvd.
Suite 102
Arlington, Virginia 22201

358-9550
Audrey I. Fried
Client Services Coordinator

Provides coordination of services and counselling for individuals who have tested HIV positive. Provides educational talks and literature on HIV and AIDS, (multi-lingual).

Family Preservation Services
Landmark Tower, Suite 302
101 South Whiting Street
Alexandria, VA 22304

370-9661
Bob Simon
Regional Director

Provides in home support to individuals with Mental Illness and secondary diagnosis' and their family, in an effort to reduce hospital time.

Fairfax County Area
Agency on Aging
12011 Government Center Parkway, # 720
Fairfax, Virginia 22035-1104

324-5411
Marion Jacknow

Offers varied services to County residents over the age of 55.

and

Seniors in Action
(Same)

324-5407
Joan Busching
Coordinator

Provides volunteers to serve the community.

Educational Opportunities

* **Literacy Council-**
Northern Virginia
2855 Annandale Road
Falls Church, Virginia 22042

237-0866
Mary Hollingshead
Coordinator

Provides tutors to anyone who desires to learn to read. Free service.

Minnie Howard School
3801 W. Braddock Rd.
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

824-6620
Mat Pasquale/ Bob Dempsey

The school offers adult education in computer, electronics, building trades, food service, academic remedial services, and secretarial skills.

Networking Sources

Alex. Chamber of Commerce

549-1000
Yvonne Croft

Community Vocational Consortium
P.O. Box 8120
Alexandria, Virginia 22306

360-6910 (Mt. Vernon MH)
Marianne Hallett

The group plans on networking to share job leads, employer resources, generic resource opportunities, and any information pertaining to vocational services.

Employer Advisory Committee
Virginia Employment Commission
100 Carpenter Dr., Suite 105A
Sterling, Virginia 22170

Individuals from VEC and local corporations attend, and various topic areas are discussed.

Unemployment Resources

* **Alexandria Residence and Housing Authority** 600 N. Fairfax Alexandria, Virginia 22314	549-7115, ext. 254 Ed Bland Coordinator Section 8 Vouchers

The vouchers can be recommended by case managers to prevent homelessness, however the waiting period can last over 2 years. Individuals can make application at the ARHA office. Voucher numbers are dependent on Federal release.

Employment Training Resource Center 2525 Mt. Vernon Ave. Alexandria, Virginia	838-0940, Director 838-0934 8:30 am - 4:30, M-Th

The center is open to all Alexandria residents, and assists in job development, resume format, job counselling, referral for services, provides limited job listings, and has telephones and typewriters available for use. The center can also refer persons to the other 2 sites (Fairfax, and Arlington), for other services.

Homeless Services of Alexandria	838-0931 Rick Howard Coordinator

Offers coordination of the services that serve the homeless individuals and families in the Alexandria area.

Alfred St. Baptist Church 301 S. Alfred St. Alexandria, Virginia 22314	683-2222 Employment Center

EDWAA Program 2525 Mt. Vernon Ave. Alexandria, Virginia	838-0808 Michelle Bralich Coordinator

The Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance program is run through the Virginia Employment Commission. The program offers vocational training and placement to individuals who are near or have maxed out their unemployment benefits. Often services are accessed by individuals that wish to change occupations to improve their chances of finding a job.

Job Training Program 838-0940
Jim Holm
Coordinator

The program is open to low income residents of Alexandria and offers on the job training to assist individuals who have limited or no skills, or wish to obtain skills to help employability.

* **ALIVE, INC.** 836-2723
Alexandria, Virginia

A charity source for food, bus tokens, and emergency assistance.

* **Virginia Employment Commission** 823-4135
823-4100 (FAX)

Job Services
386 S. Pickett Street Billy Pritchett
Alexandria, Virginia 220304 Manager

Provides job seeking services, workshops, and lectures to unemployed individuals. Persons with disabilities can call ahead to make an appointment for services.

Unemployment Insurance 823-4155
386 S.Pickett Street Marci Anderson
Alexandria, Virginia 220304 Manager

Source for unemployment benefits. Applicant can not make an appointment.

Dislocated Worker Program 823-4149
Jerry Larkins

A service for individuals affected by mass lay off. Provides job training, placement assistance, workshops, etc.

* **Virginia Employment Commission** 803-0000
13135 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway
Suite 340 Trish McGinness
Fairfax, Virginia 22033 Regional Director
Job Services

Provides Job Service and Unemployment Insurance and other VEC services to Virginia residents in that region.

* **Alexandria City Libraries**

  Burke Library — **370-6050**
  4701 Seminary Rd.
  Alexandria, Virginia

  City Library — **838-4555**
  717 Queen St.
  Alexandria, Virginia 22314

  ALICE-Alex. Library Info. Center Exchange **838-4557 (-4555)**

Possible Unpaid Work Experience Sites

* **Virginia Employment Commission** 823-4135
  823-4100 (FAX)

  Job Services
  386 S. Pickett Street — Billy Pritchett
  Alexandria, Virginia 220304 — Manager

Other

Other resources used include:

* 'Emergency Food and Shelter Directory'; November, 1990
* '1991-1992 Agency Directory, United Way Campaign'
* 'Alexandria City Government Telephone Directory'
* 'NOVAA Project Client Financial Assistance Resource Data Base'; May 8,1992 Update.

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ATTACHMENT 3:

"SAFETY NETS" GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING UNEMPLOYMENT PAPERWORK

ICON Employment Services

Guidelines for Completing Unemployment Paperwork

I. The Application (Questions 1-29)

1. It is critical to NEATLY and CLEARLY write in the individuals CORRECT Social Security Number in the boxes.

2.- 5. Write the individuals legal, proper name (as stated on his/her Social Security card). Be sure you have the proper mailing address and correct zip code. Be sure you know the city or county the individuals zip code entails (Alexandria can be tricky...)

6.-8. Be sure you have accurate information on the individuals employer, address and phone number, exact dates of employment, and exact job title; (this information is confirmed and cross-referenced, so you must be accurate).

9. It is important that you know if the individual has worked for 30 or more days for the last employer. This information tells the VEC which employer is responsible for paying the Unemployment Insurance on the past employee. It also relates to the eligibility of the individual to receive benefits.

10. Here is the confusing part...

'Lack of Work' means- The employee is still employed, but s/he is not getting scheduled for the 'normal customary hours'. For example, someone who is cut in hours due to lack of work, or furloughed due to budgetary needs. Certain restrictions apply. **OR** Your position was eliminated, and you have been laid off.

'Voluntary Quit' means- You were not fired, but the employee chose to leave the leave the job while work was available. The reason could be for medical issues; inability to perform your job due to disability; etc. Be sure to note this is noted here to assist the Deputy. A letter from a physician and/or your employer could help you plead your case. The Deputy will determine whether or not the employee left for "good cause".

'Discharge' means- You were asked to leave work (fired). You do not have to prove anything. The employer must prove you were discharged for misconduct (a direct and deliberate disregard of the employer's interest). Again the Deputy makes the determination. **NOTE:** It does not mean discharge from military service.

'Labor Dispute' means- You are out of work due to Union relation problems; i.e. strike.

'Remarks:' This is your opportunity to explain why you checked the box you did; if the individual has a medical issue, state that here. If it was a lay-off, state it. Be sure the person is covered.

11. Again this is important in tracking the responsible employer, and tracking the claimants income.

12.-15. Read the questions carefully, and know the individuals status.

16.-18. You must know the dollar figures if your individual receives these benefits. That amount may be deducted from the individuals unemployment benefits, and if the incorrect figures are stated, that person could be in a pay back situation in the future.

19. Self-explanatory.

20. If your individual has a documented disability... the answer is Yes, and don't hesitate to check the Yes box. This answer is optional (although it does not tell you this on the application...), but it will be an asset if you find yourself trying to advocate for this person during the process.

21.-23. If your individual is a Veteran, read the information carefully and answer with the correct information. (Again this information is cross-referenced).

24. and 25. These determine the state responsible for the claimant (Virginia graciously assists state individuals employed in either Maryland or D.C., an inter-state form may be required for processing); and the educational employment status affects your benefits.

26. This question should read, "Are you physically capable of obtaining a ride to a job site via friend, job coach, FASTRAN, Metro Bus or Rail, taxi, skate-board, bicycle, on foot, or any other possible means of transportation ?" We will always answer 'Yes' unless the individual MUST work at home.

27. As service providers, we must be able to explain the answer to this question.

28. Medical issues and assistive needs must be documented here. If it relates, note it now.

29. Relates to benefits, and must be cleared through a Deputy.

Prior to having your Claimant sign this application, check all of your information. The Claimant is **directly** responsible for this information regardless of disability. After it is signed, be sure the correct date is on the form, and Xerox it. Make a few copies, be sure you are covered 1. against loss of the application prior to key-in, or 2. accusations from parents or care providers of not completing the form. 3. If you have problems in completing the application, please ask the interviewer to assist.

II. Monetary Determination

When your application is accepted the VEC gives you your determination of benefits. This form is very important because it contains vital information for your individual. You can track the claim with the **P**ersonal **I**dentification **N**umber (PIN) over the form, or whenever you are relating to an interviewer at the office. Check the Social Security Number, be sure it is correct. The processing date is the day it is keyed in (if possible, have it keyed-in at the office, as you are present). The Effective Date is the previous Sunday, (they operate their filing system on a Sunday to Sunday basis). The acronym **BYED** stands for Benefit Year End Date, the Determination is good for one year. The base period is explained in the book, and relates to the 'window' of employment the VEC looks at to determine how much your check will be. Check the employers and the wages listed to be sure they are listed correctly, and nothing is left out. The highest two quarters are added together and used for determination. The Claimants' **W**eekly **B**enefit **A**llowance, the **Dur**ation (by weeks), and **M**aximum **B**enefit **A**llowance will be listed at the bottom.

Facts:

Benefit Max is $208.00/wk for 26 weeks.

You must earn a minimum of $3,250 in 2 combined quarters to be eligible.

You can correct the wage total with proof from pay stubs, W-2 forms, etc.

Tips:

If the individual was released from Federal employment, they would be issued a SF-8 and SF-50 form that would give the VEC the necessary information to process the claim. If they were released from Military service, they would receive a DD-214 set of forms. They would need to present Member 4 of that packet to the VEC at the time of the claim.

Plan to spend a lot of time in the office, bring extra work, or quarters for the pay phone. If your individual needs accommodation for the interview (i.e an interpreter; quiet place for interviewing; an area to sit at for the questioning; etc.), call the office the day prior and advise them that you are bringing in an individual who has these needs, and be sure they are ready to accommodate.

III. Continued Claim for Benefits

The book basically covers this area. The claimant can get permission to do a job search via resume. If the individual is supported by a Job Coach, or other, the search can be exclusively resume based, or the standard 'face-to-face. The contacts must be spread out. You may show several contacts on one day, but be sure to show other contacts on other days of the week as well. There must be a picture of an active search. The Job Coach can not do all the work, it must look like the individual is active in the process, and participating, regardless of disability. The Continued Claim forms must be dated properly (it will be stated on the form), and information must be accurate. Someone in Richmond could be calling to verify that job contact. Keep an accurate record of all contacts for yourself, and Xerox all forms prior to mailing (or delivering) them (**AGAIN**, guard against the trauma of a lost form).

Help your individual keep a record of all checks that arrive. Remember, this is income that must be declared on income tax forms.

Any decision made by the Deputy can be appealed if either the claimant or the employer disagrees with the determination.

Compiled through the Safety Net Grant of ICON Employment Services, with the assistance of the Unemployment Insurance Office of Virginia Employment Commission, Marci Anderson; Manager

Revised 9/30/92

VEC CLAIM FOR BENEFITS

1. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: 1 2 3 - 4 5 - 6 7 8 9

2. NAME: DOE (LAST) / JANE (FIRST) / A (MI)

3. STREET ADDRESS: 100 ELM ST., APT C (NUMBER & STREET OR ROUTE & BOX)

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ (POST OFFICE BOX)

ALEXANDRIA (CITY) / VA (STATE) / 22314 (ZIP CODE)

4. TELEPHONE: AREA CODE 703 NUMBER 555-1000

5. DO YOU LIVE WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS? [X] YES [ ] NO

IF NO, ENTER NAME OF COUNTY _____

6. MOST RECENT EMPLOYER HECHINGERS (NAME OF COMPANY)

7. ADDRESS 1010 DUKE ST. (NUMBER & STREET / ROUTE & BOX)

ADDRESS ALEXANDRIA (CITY) / VA (STATE) / 22301 (ZIP CODE)

TELEPHONE: AREA CODE 703 NUMBER 555-5000

8. DATES WORKED: FROM 01/20/91 (MO. DAY YEAR) TO 05/29/92 (MO. DAY YEAR)

OCCUPATION: STOCK CLERK

9. DID YOU WORK AT LEAST 30 WORKING DAYS? [X] YES [ ] NO

10. REASON FOR SEPARATION (EXPLAIN IN REMARKS)

[X] LACK OF WORK 40 [ ] DISCHARGE 10
[ ] VOLUNTARY QUIT 20 [ ] LABOR DISPUTE 30

REMARKS _____

11. HAVE YOU WORKED SINCE EMPLOYMENT SHOWN ABOVE? [ ] YES [X] NO

12. DATE OF BIRTH 06 / 15 / 65

13. MALE [ ] FEMALE [X]

14. I HEREBY CERTIFY, UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY, THAT I AM A CITIZEN OR NATIONAL OF THE UNITED STATES. [X] YES [ ] NO
IF 'NO' IS CHECKED, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING.
I HEREBY CERTIFY, UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY, THAT I AM IN SATISFACTORY IMMIGRATION STATUS. [ ] YES [ ] NO

ENTER ALIEN REGISTRATION # _____

15. HAVE YOU FILED ANY CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT EITHER IN VIRGINIA OR ANY OTHER STATE DURING THE LAST 18 MONTHS? [ ] YES [X] NO

IF YES, NAME OF STATE _____

16. HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR OR ARE YOU RECEIVING ANY KIND OF PENSION (INCLUDING SOCIAL SECURITY OR DISABILITY RETIREMENT)? [X] YES [ ] NO
IF YES, CHECK APPROPRIATE TYPE AND ENTER MONTHLY AMOUNT.

[X] SOCIAL SECURITY (1) AMOUNT PER MONTH 0
[ ] MILITARY (2) AMOUNT PER MONTH _____
[ ] FEDERAL CIVILIAN (3) AMOUNT PER MONTH _____
[ ] OTHER _____ (SPECIFY SOURCE) (4) AMOUNT PER MONTH _____

17. IF YOU ARE RECEIVING A RETIREMENT PENSION,
GIVE THE DATE OF YOUR RETIREMENT _____

18. ARE YOU RECEIVING OR WILL YOU RECEIVE SEVERANCE PAY, VACATION, OR HOLIDAY PAY? [ ] YES [X] NO

AMOUNT _____ PERIOD COVERED _____

19. HAVE YOU WORKED FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS A CIVILIAN DURING THE LAST 18 MONTHS? [ ] YES [X] NO

20. ARE YOU HANDICAPPED AS DEFINED IN SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973? [X] YES [ ] NO

21. HAVE YOU HAD ANY ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE? (DO NOT COUNT NATIONAL GUARD OR RESERVES) [ ] YES [X] NO
IF YES, ENTER DATES:

FROM _____ TO _____

VEC-B-10 (R. 9/90) EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

100

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY KEYED BY _____ DATE _____

EFFECTIVE DATE ___/___/___ LO# _____ ID _____

[ ] INITIAL	[ ] TOTAL	[ ] UI	1	[ ] W	1
[ ] ADD	[ ] PARTIAL	[ ] UCFE	5	[ ] NWN	2
[ ] IE ADD		[ ] UCX	7	[ ] NWI	3
[ ] REOPEN		[ ] DWC	8	[ ] NWS	4
[ ] _____		[ ] _____		[ ] NWAPI	5

OCC CODE _____ AREA/LIVES _____ DD? _____

EMP. ACCT. _____ SIC _____

MONETARY GIVEN TO CLAIMANT [ ] YES [ ] NO

REFERRED TO DEPUTY [ ] YES [ ] NO _____ DATE & TIME

REFERRED TO IS [ ] YES [ ] NO RESUMÉ [ ] YES [ ] NO

IF REFERRED TO ERP INTERVIEWER, REASON:

[ ] A&A [ ] W/S [ ] OTHER _____

22. DO YOU HAVE A MILITARY DISABILITY? [ ] YES [X] N
IF YES, IS IT 30% OR MORE? [ ] YES [ ] N

23. ARE YOU THE SPOUSE OF SOMEONE WHO HAS A TOTAL OR PERMANENT SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY OR DIED OF A SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY? [ ] YES [X] N

24. HAVE YOU WORKED IN ANY STATE OTHER THAN VIRGINIA DURING THE LAST 24 MONTHS? [ ] YES [X] N

25. HAVE YOU WORKED FOR AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION DURING THE LAST 18 MONTHS? [ ] YES [X] N

26. DO YOU HAVE TRANSPORTATION TO LOOK FOR WORK AND TO GET TO AND FROM WORK? [X] YES [ ] N

27. ARE THERE ANY HOURS OR DAYS OF THE WEEK THAT YOU ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR WORK? [ ] YES [X] N
IF YES, WHY? _____

28. IS THERE ANY REASON YOU CANNOT ACCEPT FULL TIME WORK NOW? [ ] YES [X] N
IF YES, WHY? _____

29. ARE YOU ATTENDING OR PLANNING TO ATTEND SCHOOL? [ ] YES [X] N

TO CLAIMANT: The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that you be furnished this statement because you are being asked to furnish your Social Security Account Number on the claim form(s) given to you. Your Social Security Number is solicited under the authority of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Disclosure of your Social Security Number for this purpose is MANDATORY and must be entered on the forms you submit to claim unemployment compensation.

Your Social Security Number will be used to report your unemployment compensation to the Internal Revenue Service as income that is taxable, to determine your eligibility for benefits, compute the amount of benefits to which you may be entitled, and for statistical purposes. This information will be disseminated to other governmental agencies subject to the restrictions of the Virginia Privacy Protection Act for their use in the proper administration of the law. Failure to provide the requested information will make you ineligible to receive benefits.

CERTIFICATION: I acknowledge receipt of notice of the Privacy Act and certify that the information given on this form is correct. Further, I declare under penalty of perjury that the citizenship/alien status information on this form is true and correct. I understand that penalties are provided for making false statements or failing to disclose material facts to obtain benefits. I also certify that I was given a copy of the booklet "Unemployment Insurance Handbook for Claimants." I was also advised of my rights and responsibilities under the Unemployment Compensation Act and I was given the opportunity to ask questions concerning those rights and responsibilities. In addition, I understand that I have the right to review the information provided to the Commission by my former employer on the Employer's Report of Separation. (As a partially unemployed claimant, I have read and understand the instructions to Partial Claimants.) In the event any benefits paid pursuant to this claim constitute an overpayment, upon notification, I will immediately repay such amount or be liable for all collection costs, including interest, collection agency fees and attorney fees up to 33-1/3 percent incurred in collection efforts, in addition to any amount overpaid.

Jane Doe 6/1/92
SIGNATURE OF CLAIMANT DATE

VIRGINIA EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION
MONETARY DETERMINATION

PROCESSED: 04/23/92

NAME: SSN: 787 39 8383 EFF DATE: 04 19 92 BYED: 04/17/93

PIN: 67306-3 BASE PERIOD: 01/01/91 THRU 12/31/91

EMPLOYER NAME	EMPLOYER SERIAL	1/1-3/31 1991 WAGES	4/1-6/30 1991 WAGES	7/1-9/30 1991 WAGES	10/1-12/31 1991 WAGES

WBA	DUR	MBA	TOTAL WAGES	1ST QTR	2ND QTR	3RD QTR	4TH QTR
000	00	0000	000000000000				

NO WAGES ON FILE

APPEAL RIGHTS

IF YOU DISAGREE WITH THIS DETERMINATION, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL. YOUR APPEAL MUST BE FILED ON OR BEFORE THE FINAL DATE FOR APPEAL SHOWN BELOW OR IT BECOMES FINAL. THE APPEAL MUST BE IN WRITING, MUST STATE THE REASONS YOU DISAGREE, AND MUST BE MAILED OR DELIVERED (1) TO THE LOCAL OFFICE WHERE YOU FILED YOUR CLAIM, OR (2) TO THE APPEALS SECTION, VIRGINIA EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION, P. O. BOX 1358, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23211.

FINAL DATE FOR APPEAL IS: BY DEPUTY:

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ATTACHMENT 4:

REPORT OF THE SAFETY NETS COMMITTEE OF THE
NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT STEERING COMMITTEE
(REVISION OF APRIL 1992)

Report of the Safety Nets Committee of the Northern Virginia Region

I. Introduction

In an effort to improve supported employment services, a regional committee was formed to look at the effects of job loss on consumers and their families and make recommendations for improved service delivery. The committee includes representatives from Community Service Boards as well as private non-profit agencies; members have been drawn from the Northern Virginia CSB jurisdictions of Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Arlington, and Alexandria. The committee sought input from consumers through the dissemination of a survey. A position paper was also drafted and sent to a wide audience. Written and verbal comments were received and incorporated into this report.

The intent of this paper is to describe the critical elements of a competent supported employment service. These elements are presented as accomplishment areas and include a focus on what needs to take place during periods of job loss. The committee fully recognizes that these activities operate within the context of a total service system and that other parts of this system may need to develop new ways of responding to consumer job loss.

A. Values. Supported employment is based on a set of values or principles initially expressed in the writings of Wolf Wolfensburger and most recently interpreted by John O'Brien. They are Community Presence, Community Participation, Competency, Image Enhancement, and Choice. The critical theme of these values is to involve people with disabilities in the typical activities of the community, enabling them to have real homes, real friends, and real jobs. They help to shape the goals of supported employment and need to be held up as a standard when developing options to be used in times of unemployment.

The first principle speaks to being present in the community where typical activities take place. Frequent access to real work sites, restaurants, banks, post offices, or recreational centers sets the stage for sharing those ordinary places which define community life.

The second principle calls for meaningful participation in those community settings. Such participation leads to the development of relationships with others and decreased dependence on the paid staff of human service agencies.

The third involves the development of competencies or skills, such as performing a job or using a communication device. This includes the acquisition and practice of social skills and the development of an interpersonal life style.

The fourth is the development of a positive image. The messages which are conveyed to others in both appearance and behavior, as well as the messages received by an individual from others, are very important in defining who that person is. People who have been historically devalued by their disability should have the opportunity to be seen as a people having value and worth knowing.

Lastly, the fifth calls for the exercise of choice on the part of the consumer. This includes not only where an

individual spends time but also how that time is spent. It requires the acquisition of decision making skills and the support for using those skills in a variety of settings.

B. **Consumer Survey.** In an effort to get information from consumers, a questionnaire was mailed to the program managers of 23 agencies in Northern Virginia. Program managers were asked to complete the questionnaires by interviewing five individuals served by their program. Fifty-six responses were received, largely from people with mental retardation. Their primary concerns when faced with unemployment were the loss of money and having nothing to do. Their preference for what should happen when job loss occurs was to find another job as quickly as possible. Consumers indicated that while looking for the next job, they wished to do volunteer work, go on "field trips", or stay at home. More than half of the respondents said that no one had ever discussed unemployment with them. Finally, more than half of the individuals wanted a voice in deciding what activities would take place in the face of a job loss and felt that they might need a variety of supports while not working. Results of the survey are attached to this paper.

II. Supported Employment Accomplishment Areas

Based upon the values enunciated in the preceding section, five accomplishment areas are presented which provide a way of conceptualizing a supported employment service. These areas were developed by members of the Association of Supported Work Organizations, a national network of service providers who are linked to the Specialized Training Program of the University of Oregon through the use of a common technology, data base, and set of values. Furthermore, the notion of defining and measuring accomplishments was derived from the writings of such business thinkers as Thomas Gilbert and W.E.B. Deming. Finally, the former Office of Supported Employment of the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services adopted these accomplishment areas as a way of conceptualizing the primary activities of a supported employment service.

A. **Paid Employment Opportunities Are Available.** This area encompasses all of the activities which lead a consumer to securing a job. It includes the identification of prospective employers, process for negotiating job requirements, and maintenance of the relationship between the supported employee and community business after a job has been secured.

B. **Work Requirements Met.** The focus of this accomplishment area is the successful work performance of consumers. Included here is careful attention to job analysis and, in many cases, task analysis. A thorough understanding of job requirements on the part of an employment specialist should lead to the implementation of high quality skill training which is matched to both the needs of the supported employee and his/her work setting.

C. **Employees Integrated.** The development of satisfying relationships between a consumer and his/her co-workers is the hallmark of a successful placement. Employment specialists gear their efforts in this area to analyzing the potential for relationships to occur and, in many instances, structuring work routines so that relationships are actually fostered. Supported employment staff must be skilled in

assessing both the culture of the work place and the social preferences and social skill needs of supported employees.

D. **Individual Support and Advocacy Provided.** In order that services are provided in a manner which supports individual strengths and needs, the total service system must advocate for choice. Furthermore, plans must be developed which teach consumers how to make informed decisions. This accomplishment area includes activities which are often coordinated by case managers, such as individual program planning, arranging for situational job assessments, making referrals to community programs, and assessing individual satisfaction.

E. **Organizational Capacity Present to Provide Ongoing Support.** This final area speaks to the capacity of an individual agency to provide high quality supported employment services. It includes the organization's ability to obtain and manage financial and personnel resources.

III. Supported Employment Services During Periods of Unemployment

In times of unemployment, people should engage in activities which maintain their skills, help them to obtain new jobs, and enable them to acquire those resources and supports which allow them to survive unemployment.

A. During Times of Unemployment... Paid Employment Opportunities Available

Supported employment organizations must have the capacity to engage in on going job development activities. This is necessary in order that people out of work can return to employment as quickly as possible.

Current Practices

At present, a variety of approaches are used to develop new jobs. The specific approach used is somewhat dependent upon the resources of the particular provider agency and the nature of their contractual agreements with funders. There is no generic response which is made by all agencies.

Depending on the specific situation, responses range from referring the unemployed person to another supported employment program, providing career counseling, conducting job development activities within the same agency, or simply referring the person to a job which is currently available within an agency's internal job bank.

Barriers

Perhaps the biggest barrier to job development is the lack of financial and personnel resources at the time of unemployment. This stems partly from DRS practice which only provides for very limited initial job development activity; furthermore, it can be difficult to access these funds more than once within a given 12 month period. With respect to personnel, supported employment programs can only provide those services for which they can bill, seriously limiting the allocation of staff time to job development, whether ongoing or initial.

Recommendations for Change

There are several recommendations for change which should lead to positive outcomes in this area:

- Situational assessments in job sites
- Temporary jobs
- Tours of job sites
- Support provided by families or residential programs
- Individuals going out on their own and finding jobs

It is important to keep in mind that this list represents ways that individuals have sought solutions to the problem of unemployment. This is not a menu of options which are available to all persons.

Barriers

- Lack of consensus around what kinds or even if, alternative activities are legitimate and cost effective.
- Lack of planning for alternative activities should unemployment occur.
- Lack of clearly identified and defined roles for service providers, residential agencies, funding sources, families and consumers.
- Lack of knowledge and use of current resources, such as generic services and natural supports.
- Lack of resources to provide alternative activities while supporting job development efforts.

Recommendations

- Acknowledge occasional unemployment as a legitimate, albeit unpleasant, aspect of participation in the work force.
- Define safety net services as a legitimate aspect of supported employment.
- Prevent times of unemployment from becoming periods of time which foster loss of skill and loss of the motivation to work.
- Analyze the skills necessary for consumers to cope with periods of unemployment and develop strategies to both teach these skills and support their acquisition.

C. During Times of Unemployment...
Integration

The tendency of persons during times of unemployment is to become increasingly isolated and/or end up in segregated activities. Consumers should be provided with support to maintain, develop, and utilize relationships which assist them in finding a new job. There should also be an increased focus on developing job options within highly integrated settings.

Current Provisions

Little, if any, attention is paid to community integration during times of unemployment. The activities in which consumers are engaged are, for the most part, conducted in isolation from the rest of society. There are, in fact, lost social contacts in the sense that nothing is done to foster the maintenance of relationships which were in place on jobs sites. Furthermore, nothing is done to foster the development of new relationships.

Barriers

· Perhaps the single greatest barrier in this area is that social integration, in and of itself, is not particularly valued by the service system.

· Because of this perceived lack of value, the promotion of social relationships is not seen as a function of the service delivery system.

Recommendations

· Natural supports should not only be developed at the work site, but should, additionally, be maintained during periods of unemployment.

· Networking among consumers with people of similar interests and/or goals should be fostered.

D. **During Times of Unemployment...**
Individual Support and Advocacy Provided

The possibility of job loss should be discussed openly within the context of the individual planning process. This could allow for the assignment of specific responsibilities to individual planning team members. It would also provide a forum for the discussion of individual preferences, needs, resources, and potential strategies to be implemented.

Current Provision

Although some form of individual planning process is available, consumers surveyed report that the possibility of unemployment has never been discussed with them. There appears to be no system in place which anticipates their needs or the needs of their families.

Barriers

· Lack of experience in dealing with the unemployment of persons with disabilities within the context of supported employment.

· Lack of identification of what constitutes "good" safety net services.

· Lack of planning by service providers, families, and consumers for the consequences of losing jobs.

· Lack of identification of who is responsible for the provision of supports during periods of unemployment.

· Lack of interagency coordination and linkages.

Recommendations for Change

· There should be anticipatory planning for alternative activities and other safety net services in the event of unemployment.

· There should be a clear delineation of responsibilities between supported employment service providers, the Community Services Boards, and the Department of Rehabilitative Services for actions to be taken in the event of job loss which will facilitate rapid re-employment.

E. During Times of Unemployment...
Organizational Capacity Present to Provide Ongoing Support

The service system as a whole, as well as the individual organizations within it, should have a clear sense of what constitutes high quality safety net services and who should provide them. Responsibilities should be delineated in contractual agreements, linkages should be developed and maintained, and necessary resources should be available and accessible.

Current Practices

· There is a failure to provide systematic solutions.

· Although two Community Services Boards have acknowledged the problem and have referenced it within their contractual agreements, the service system responds in a highly individualized manner when someone actually looses a job. DRS may or may not re-open a case; CSB's may or may not agree to fund or provide re-employment services as a part of long term follow along; support agencies, case management, and/or residential services may or may not perceive a responsibility to handle such issues as alternative activities, financial aid, and homelessness.

· Skilled and resourceful persons have developed creative solutions on a individual basis.

· Consumers who require re-employment services are often perceived negatively as "cycling through again."

Barriers

· There is a lack of consensus about who should do what and how.

· There is a lack of consensus about what kinds of activities constitute effective safety net services and about what agency should or will take responsibility for providing the necessary resources for specific activities.

· There are no funding mechanisms for a support agency to provide safety net services. At the same time, such agencies often feel a great sense of responsibility for doing so, since they have the most extensive contact with the supported employee.

· Independent support agencies are generally not aware of alternative funding sources or mechanisms for re-employment services.

Recommendations

· A consensus needs to be developed regarding re-employment services. A potential solution might be to adopt a re-employment standard around which individual cases may vary but which serve as a guide to typical experiences.

· A data base needs to be developed for the purpose of more clearly defining the problem of unemployment in order that appropriate solutions are developed.

· There should be ready access to funding and services when re-employment becomes necessary.

· A consensus needs to be developed, at least within service delivery jurisdictions, about what constitutes effective and desirable safety net services, and who will provide and fund them. This should be identified in contracts for services, purchase of ser-

vice agreements, interagency agreements, and other relevant documents.

· Research and demonstration projects should be encouraged in order to identify effective strategies and best practices in safety net services.

· Direct service staff should receive training in strategies and procedures necessary to plan for and provide safety net services for the people to whom they provide services.

· A program evaluation process should be developed for use by supported employment programs to guide them in the provision of effective safety net services and engage in identifying and solving problems.

IV. Summary

This paper represents an attempt to reduce the confusion which exists when consumers become unemployed, as there is not an orderly and consistent response which has been promoted by the service delivery system. The provision of support to individuals during times of job loss varies from person to person, and depends on the creativity and flexibility of the families, staff, and communities involved. While creative and flexible responses may be highly valued, systematic solutions must be developed. These solutions should help consumers, their families, and service providers to be more knowledgeable about the resources available to them in times of unemployment and reduce the fear associated with the risk of entering support employment.

· Individual consumer plans should be developed which anticipate job loss. These plans should be developed at the time of initial referral to a supported employment program.

· Agencies should build a mechanism for continuous job development activities into their staff routines and rate structure. This would address the issue of being able to bill for such services.

· DRS practices should allow for an increase in hours authorized for initial job development which would better reflect consumer needs. This would lead to better job matches, thus preventing job loss due to incompatibility between the supported employee and job.

· DRS and the CSB's should develop joint agreements which establish guidelines for the re-opening of cases for individuals who lose their jobs within twelve months of initial placement.

· DRS and the CSB's should develop a mechanism for re-opening cases on a timely basis and at a speed which meets the needs of the unemployed individual. This process might include the involvement of CSB case managers in updating relevant assessments, such as medical examinations and financial eligibility. This could, perhaps, take place at regular intervals.

· Agencies should become more skilled in assessing the strengths and needs of consumers at the point of referral to supported employment. This would include the use of situational assessments.

B. During Times of Unemployment...
Alternative Activities Requirements Met

In times of unemployment, we often lose the focus we had on skill development and all too easily fall back into providing day support or day care, creating many alternative activities. The system does not recognize that the skills developed by a person during employment may be useful in helping him or her survive unemployment and in re-integrating into the job market.

Current Practices

Currently there are no pervasive systematic provisions for supporting activities which are an alternative to employment and which lead an individual to regain employment. Agencies have developed a variety of responses and activities in order to provide some measure of structure and activity for the consumers they serve. Little attention, however, is paid to the relationship between these activities and the acquisition or maintenance of skills, the development of new jobs, and unemployment services which promote the consumer's ability to obtain and keep another job. Some activities which have been offered to consumers are as follows:

· Recreation programs

· Day activity programs

· Volunteer jobs

· Sheltered work

· Clubhouse programs

· Scheduled community access activities

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
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